

# animals&men

THE JOURNAL OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



## THYLACINE RESEARCH PROJECTS

New Zealand lake and sea monsters; 2008 BCIB conference; Trinidad lake monster; Robert Rines retires; Scott Norman dies.  
News, reviews and more.....

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# EDITORIAL



Dear friends,

Welcome to yet another issue of *Animals & Men*. As both the magazine, and its decrepit old editor, approach the big five-oh, it is a pleasing, if slightly self-indulgent occupation, to look back over the past fourteen years, and see what we have achieved.

The magazine has certainly come a long way, but in the last few months I have been remastering the early issues in order to put them together in the 'collected editions' volumes, and - on the whole - it has been a pleasurable experience. I had forgotten how good they were, and although (with the benefit of good old hindsight) the production values ain't all that they could have been, considering that they were produced by a bunch of amateurs who really had no idea what they were doing, they are pretty good.

All the books and magazines prior to 1998 were produced on an old Amiga 500+ games computer, and utilised large amounts of glue and letraset. After 1999, everything we produced was done on a PC, and we still have most of them in electronic format, so I am overjoyed to be given the chance to rewrite history, and go back and fix the millions of typos and formatting errors that these days would never make it to the finished product.

It is tempting to just sit back and rest upon our laurels, but the CFZ is always about moving onward and upward, and although we have already produced 39 books, and 43 issues of this journal, we have another thirty odd books in the pipeline, and, plan to have over 100 titles out there within three years. The CFZ museum is well underway, and we plan to be open for business, at least in a limited way, by early summer.

We are still trying to become a charity, and hope that, when eventually we do, we shall be able to draw upon EC monies that would otherwise be spent upon dull, and probably ridiculously PC projects, to start our own range of community projects, which will - we hope - take the

CFZ to hitherto unsuspected heights. We have strong links with a zoo (which is co-owned by my darling wife), and have a number of highly important conservation projects that we want to do in conjunction with them.

The future has never looked so good.....So why is it that more people seem to be taking a pop at us now than ever before? It sometimes seems that all I have to do is to raise my head slightly above the parapet before some bugger throws a brick at me.

In the past few months we have been accused openly of self-aggrandisement, of only running the CFZ so we can have expensive foreign holidays to places like Guyana, of bringing the subject into disrepute because I allow the public, and their kids, into the Weird Weekend, and try to make it fun rather than pompous and self-defeating, and of blasphemy, because in one of my recent episodes of *On the Track* I dared to say that Bishop Usher was sadly mistaken when he said that the world was only 6,000 years old. On top of this, two professional media companies have accused me of 'only being in it for the money' because I refused to let them use CFZ video and photographs for free.

None of this has any effect on the future of the CFZ. It upsets me on a personal level, partly because I am bipolar and easily upset, and partly because we are on the side of the angels, and I have only ever tried to steer the CFZ along what I believe is the best path to actually prove the truth of Heuvelmans' assertion which is printed at the bottom of this - and the last 42 - editorials.

Sorry for bellyaching, but I feel that with the CFZ membership I am amongst friends, and if friends can't bellyache at each other occasionally then they ain't very good friends.

Onwards and upwards,

Jon Downes

## "THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE"

# THE FACULTY OF THE CENTRE FOR FORTEAN ZOOLOGY



*"In her abnormalities, nature reveals her secrets." (Goethe)*

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# NEWSFILE

COMPILED AND EDITED BY JONATHAN DOWNES WITH OLL LEWIS

In the fourteen years that I have been editing *Animals & Men*, I have never known there be such a glut of new animal species reported, and old ones thought extinct rediscovered, as there have been between December 2007-March 2008. Herewith, a selection...

## GREAT SNAKES

*Naja ashei* is not only the world's newest snake species, it's also the largest spitting cobra, scientists with WildlifeDirect announced. Blood and tissue samples helped confirm what some snake experts have long believed: that these massive, aggressive, extremely venomous snakes, which can grow to more than 9 feet (274 centimeters) long, form a separate species.



Commonly known as Ashe's spitting cobra, the new species is named after one such expert: the late James Ashe, the founder of the Bio-Ken Snake Farm research center in Watamu, Kenya. Ashe believed that this coastal snake was different from any other.

*Naja ashei* takes its place among the 30 or so known cobra species, including the king cobra, which is the world's largest venomous snake.

## FOJA FINDS

When the large furry creature first scuttled into their jungle camp looking for its supper, the scientists assumed it was a cat. But after several further visits, when it tamely allowed itself to be picked up, they realised they were actually holding a giant rat. The monster rodent was the most spectacular discovery in a remote area of Indonesia which experts are describing as a "lost world" of hitherto-unknown animals and plants. At the other end of the size scale was a pygmy possum thought to be one of the world's smallest marsupials.



"These are two animals which were totally unknown to science and we're absolutely thrilled

**NEW & REDISCOVERED**

*to have discovered them," said one of the explorers who ventured into the thick jungles of Indonesia's Papua province. "It's comforting to know that there's a place on Earth so isolated that it remains the absolute realm of wild nature," said Bruce Beehler, vice-president of the U.S.-based wildlife group Conservation International.*



## NEW NEWTS (not)

An expedition, organised by the Natural History Museum, has discovered three new species of salamander in a largely unexplored forest in Costa Rica. The new species are amongst 5,300 plants, insects and amphibians recorded during three explorations of La Amistad National Park on the Costa Rica-Panama border.



La Amistad is the biggest forest reserve in Central America, yet it remains one of the least explored

places on the continent. These new discoveries increase the number of salamander species in Costa Rica from 40 to 43, making it a centre of diversity for these amphibians.

*'Finding so many new species in one area is exciting, particularly as this is probably the only place in the world you can find these animals,'* said Dr Alex Monro from the Natural History Museum, who is leading the project exploring La Amistad and recording its biodiversity. *'It shows we still have a lot to learn about the variety of wildlife in this region. We have four more expeditions planned this year – who knows what we could find when we go back?'*



Two of the new salamanders are from the *Bolitoglossa* genus and are nocturnal, coming out at night to feed. The first *Bolitoglossa* species is eight centimetres long and black, with a bold red stripe down its back and small yellow markings on its side. The second *Bolitoglossa* species is six centimetres long and deep brown with a pale cream underside. The third salamander is from the *Nototriton* (dwarf salamander) genus and is a

mere three centimetres in length, with red-brown colouring and black markings on its side.

## FLUTTERING BY

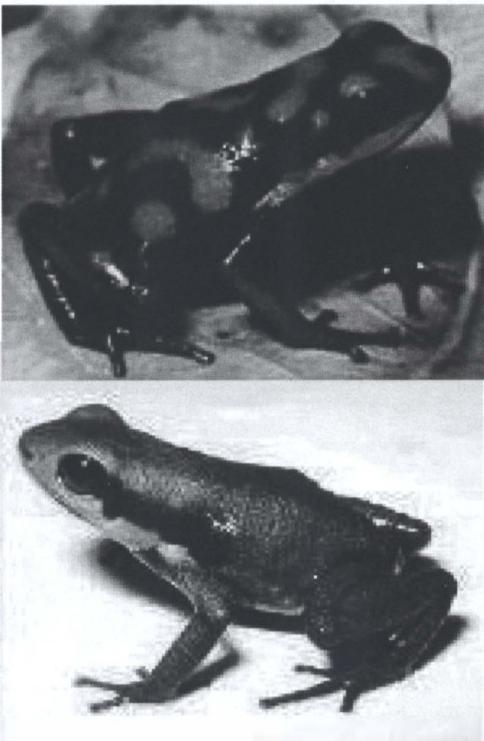


A new butterfly species, found only in the high Andes of South America, has been discovered by a scientist at the Natural History Museum, London. *Idioneurula donegani* is a small to medium-sized coffee-brown butterfly with eyespots on its hind wings, from the highest peaks in Colombia's Serranía de los Yariguies. The butterfly was discovered during the first exploration of the area, which led to the creation of a national park in the region by the Colombian government.

Blanca Huertas, butterfly curator at the Natural History Museum, who discovered and described the new species said, 'This is an amazing discovery. Butterflies are a diverse group of insects with almost 20,000 known species, 40 per cent of which are in South America. We have been to almost every corner of the world and although some remote parts of the Neotropical region remain unexplored, we only occasionally discover a new species.'

## FINDING FROGGIES

Two new species of frog have been discovered in the Central Cordillera of Colombia by Alonso Quevedo from ProAves and Oscar Gallego from Tolima University. The frogs were discovered in July, 2006, when the research team was looking for endangered bird species in the Central Mountain Range. The new frogs have been named *Ranitomeya tolimense* and *Ranitomeya doriswansoni* in recent months. *Ranitomeya tolimense* is mostly yellow, and *Ranitomeya doriswansoni* is black and red, and has a short fifth toe.



## FIVE STAR PETRELS

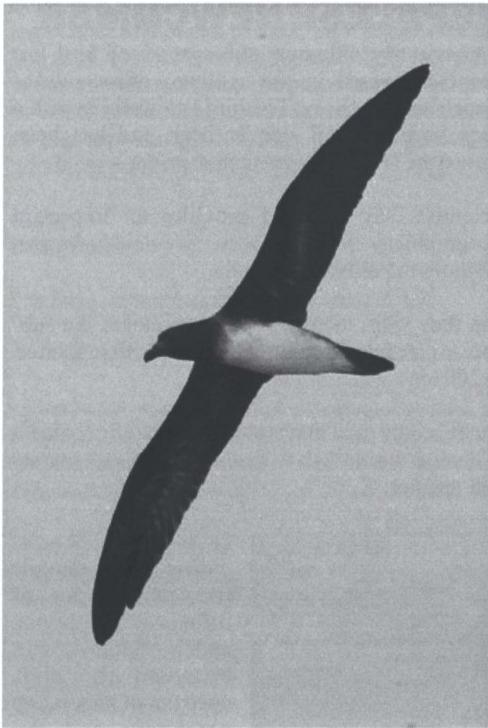
The New Zealand storm petrel, which was thought to have been extinct for 150 years until rediscovered in 2003, has again been sighted and recently captured in the Hauraki Gulf off the North Island of New Zealand, but its breeding site remains a mystery.



A team, including Department of Conservation staff and scientists, caught three birds in October and early November. This means that seven birds have been captured since the petrel was rediscovered by Dr Stephenson and Sav Saville of the coast of Whitianga in January 2003.

A bird not seen for 80 years has been rediscovered in the Pacific to the delight of conservationists. Only two records of Beck's petrel have ever existed previously, from the late 1920s when ornithologist Rollo Beck collected two of the tube-nosed seabirds on his quest for museum specimens from the region.

Now, an expert on a ship in the Bismarck Archipelago, north-east of Papua New Guinea, has photographed more than 30 Beck's petrels and his account is being published (March 7) in the



Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club. There were some young birds amongst the group which indicates that the birds have a breeding site close by. A recently dead young Beck's petrel was also found at sea, becoming only the third specimen in existence.

Hopes that the bird had not gone extinct were raised in Australia two years ago when tour guide Richard Baxter thought he had seen a Beck's petrel in the Coral Sea off Queensland. Rare bird experts rejected this sighting because photos were not sufficiently clear.

## NEPALESE NEWCOMER

A previously unknown sub-species of bird has been discovered in the southern grasslands of Nepal, scientists say. The bird is a warbler with a very long tail and slender beak and has been named the Nepal rufous-vented prinia.

Scientists say the bird provides an important geographical link between previously-known varieties in Pakistan and India.

But they warn its tiny population means the sub-species is endangered. The bird was first spotted in 2005 in a wetland area.

But it is only now that taxonomists have decided it is distinctive enough to be described as a separate sub-species.



It has different dimensions from the two other types of rufous-vented prinia, and in colour comes between the rich chestnut of its western neighbour and the grey of the one to the east.

## ISRAELI EEL

*Gymnothorax Baranesi*, a new moray eel, was discovered by Shai Einbinder during a fish course that was taking place at the Interuniversity Institute for Marine Sciences of Eilat (IUI). The specimen was fished from 200m depth near the edge of the deep coral reef. It was described by Shai and Eran Brokovich of the IUI, with the help of the fish taxonomist David Smith from the

Smithsonian in Washington DC.



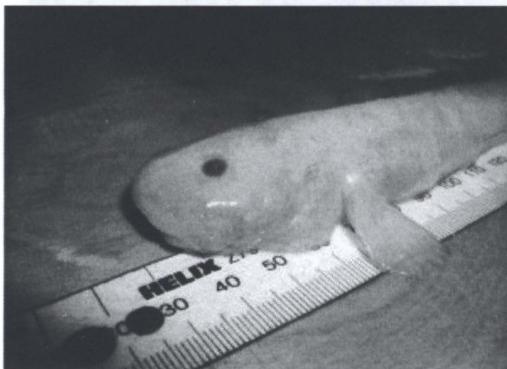
They named the eel *Gymnothorax Baranesi* in tribute to Dr. Avi Baranes, one of the few people who have dedicated their career to research of the deep bottom of the Gulf of Aqaba, and described, together with Dr. Dani Golani (Hebrew University of Jerusalem) many new species of fish. This finding of a new species in only 200m of water in an area that has been well studied for many years (and in fact, directly in front of a major marine laboratory) indicates how much we still have to learn about the marine habitat.

## NOTHING SAYS 'I LOVE YOU' LIKE A DEAD FISH

Slippery and squat, it is hardly beautiful in the conventional sense. But when Dr Nikki King discovered a new species of fish she did not think twice before naming it after her fiancé. Dr King first set eyes on the unlikely token of her love during a deep-sea research expedition in the darkest depths of Southern Indian Ocean.

Working aboard the Royal Research Ship

Discovery, she was part of a team on the Benthic Crozet project, a research initiative investigating



biodiversity off the Crozet Islands, a small sub-Antarctic archipelago.

When a trawl landed a bounty of fish, Dr King, from the University of Aberdeen, singled out six species she thought unusual. In the middle of an ocean with limited facilities, she decided to store them and take them back to base.

*"I could only identify the six so far – not down to*

*species level. So we packed them into preservative and took them home,"* she said. There, the research fellow asked the assistance of an expert team of taxonomy experts, Dr Peter Møller and Professor Jørgen Nielsen of the Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen, and Professor Guy Duhamel of the Paris Natural History Museum.

After some painstaking work, her instincts were proved right – until now the species were completely unknown to science, a discovery that fulfils a professional ambition of Dr King's.

*"Ever since I set my heart on becoming a marine biologist I hoped I would discover one new species, so to have discovered six is tremendously exciting,"* she said.

## OUT OF THE TRUNK

Until recently, only 15 species of elephant shrews, were known to science. However, in March of 2006, California Academy of Sciences Research Associate Galen Rathbun and a team of collaborators confirmed the existence of a new species that lives only in two high-altitude forest blocks in the mountains of south-central Tanzania. Their discovery appeared in the



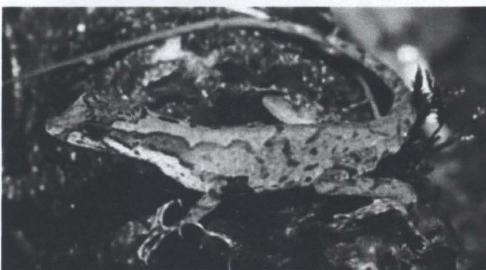
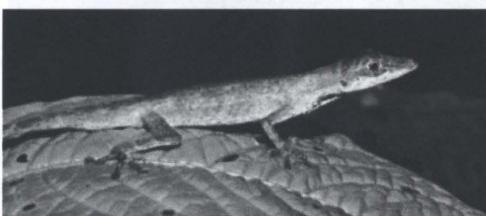
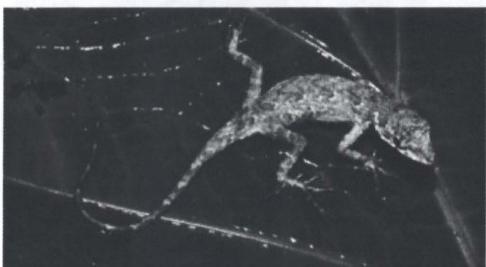
January 25 issue of The Journal of Zoology.

This is one of the most exciting discoveries of my career,' said Rathbun, who has studied the ecology, social structure, and evolution of sengis for more than 30 years. 'It is the first new species of giant elephant-shrew to be discovered in more than 126 years. From the moment I first lifted one of the animals into our photography tent, I knew it must be a new species, not just because of its distinct colouring, but because it was so heavy!' The new species, which has been named the grey-faced sengi (*Rhynochocyon udzungwensis*), weighs about 700 grams (1.5 pounds), which is 25 percent larger than any other known sengi.

## ANY OLD ANOLES?

The first four species of live endemic anoles ever discovered in this region were found in a single day during a biological research expedition at 6000 feet in the Serranía de Tabasara of the Panamanian Highlands. As recently described in *Herpetologia* by Dr. Gunther Köhler and his research colleagues, all of the anoles found in the cloud forest of the Serranía de Tabasara mountain chain top at 6000 feet above sea level are almost certainly endemic to this area, considering their isolated habitat. This makes them the first endemic reptiles ever discovered in the Serranía de Tabasara; a poorly explored region, biologically speaking.

Discovering all four in a single day was quite spectacular. Koehler and his fellows joined the research expedition several months ago, and were delighted with the once in a life time experience: 'During previous expeditions, we had found new species, one at a time - but four species within 24 hours, that was incredible!' said the herpetologist from the Senckenberg Research Institute in Frankfurt, Germany.



## **THE LATE BRUSH FINCH**

A new bird species, the Antioquia brush-finches or *Atlapetes blancae* — has been described as a result of studies supported by Fundación ProAves in Colombia. Ornithologists are concerned about the conservation of the new species, as nobody knows whether or not it still exists.

The species was recognised from 3 skins collected separately over the last 50 years. They were initially thought to be from another species, but have recently been recognised as a separate species. No one has seen a live one, and it isn't even known for sure exactly where they are to be found as the skins were not well labelled or documented.

The description of the Antioquia brush-finches was published in the latest edition of the Bulletin of the British Ornithologists' Club by Thomas Donegan of ProAves. Three mid-20th Century specimens of *Atlapetes blancae* were found in the natural history museums of Colombian universities, all of which were likely collected near a seminary of La Salle University in Antioquia department of Colombia. *Atlapetes blancae* has distinctive plumage, confirming its identification as a previously undescribed species. Various explorations in the region where the species was collected over 35 years ago have taken place but none resulted in any observation of the new species.



## **EVERYBODY HAS SOMETHING TO HIDE EXCEPT FOR ME AND MY MONKEY**



A previously unknown species of uakari monkey was found during recent hunting trips in the Amazon, a New Zealand primatologist has announced.

Jean-Phillipe Boublé of the University of Auckland found the animal after following native Yanomamo Indians on their hunts along the Rio Aracá, a tributary of the Rio Negro in Brazil.

*"They told us about this black uakari monkey, which was slightly different to the one we knew"*

from Pico de Neblina National Park, where I'd worked earlier," Boubli said.

"I searched for that monkey for at least five years. The reason I couldn't find it was because the place where they were was sort of unexpected."

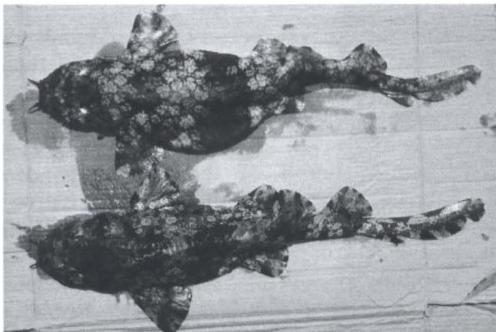
Uakaris normally live in flooded river forests, but this one turned up in a mountainous region on the Brazil-Venezuela border, far from its nearest relatives

## WOBBLY WOBBEGONGS

Two new wobbegong shark species have been found off the South West coast of Western Australia, during catch monitoring of the regional commercial shark fishery.

Details of the new wobbegong species have recently been published in the taxonomic journal *Zootaxa*, following a collaborative project by CSIRO taxonomist Dr Peter Last and WA Department of Fisheries shark researcher Justin Chidlow.

Mr Chidlow said 'When I first saw the floral banded wobbegong it looked similar to the species



many fishers know as the cobbler wobbegong (*Sutorectus tentaculatus*), but on closer inspection there were some very obvious differences that help define it as a separate species.

'Identification of the dwarf spotted wobbegong was a little more complicated, because we initially thought the specimens we had were juveniles of the spotted wobbegong species, or *Orectolobus maculatus*. However, we also noticed some distinct differences in sizes at maturity in the specimens we had observed, so it became obvious that the new species was more like a dwarf form of the known species. The word *parvi* is latin for small, hence the name *parvimaculatus* for the new species.'

## HOPPY HARLEQUIN

After 14 years without having been seen, several young scientists supported by the Conservation Leadership Programme (CLP), have rediscovered the Carrikeri harlequin frog (*Atelopus carrikeri*) in a remote mountainous region in Colombia.



The critically endangered Carrikeri harlequin frog was recently rediscovered by the Project Atelopus team in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta Mountains in Colombia's Magdalena department. Colombia is one of the world's richest countries in amphibian diversity with more than 583 species. Unfortunately, in the past several years, there has been a decline in amphibian populations especially in higher elevations in Colombia.

*"By discovering that the endangered frog still exists, we hope it will show how important conservation is," said Luis Alberto Rueda, scientist for the Project Atelopus team who led the expedition. "And we plan to continue with our research so that we can better assist in helping to ensure that this frog will not become extinct."*

## NEW PHILLIPINO MONKEY?

Just as we were going to press, we received the first reports of what appear to be a new species of monkey from the Philippines. According to the *Philippines Star*:

A group of red-faced monkeys that can mimic human laughter has been sighted in the mountain ranges of Sal-dab, a sacred mountain in Northern Mindanao, The STAR learned recently. The monkey that mimics human voice is known to natives as Uma-ay and is believed to bring a curse on whoever sees it

According to local folklore, whoever sees the creature will lose his way in the jungle or may encounter misfortune, accident or even death along the way.

The monkey, which is not included in the list of newly discovered animal

species of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), lives in high trees and subsists on fruits of wild trees in the forest. The DENR Protected and Wildlife Bureau (PAWB) has reported sighting 14 new animal species since 1998

Most of the creatures, however, were of the rat and bat species. A tribal trapper interviewed by The STAR last year said the Uma-ay looks human because they do not have hair on their faces and can mimic the human voice. They grow up to the size of the native monkeys in the area.

*"The laugh of an Uma-ay is an ominous sign, it means misfortune or even death,"* the tribal hunter said in the Hiliga-onon dialect. The hunter declined to name the location of the place where the Uma-ay can be found but said it is sacred ground where tribal elders offer sacrifices and perform yearly rituals to appease their gods. Aside from the Uma-ay, the tribal folk also mentioned that they sighted an unnamed feathered bird that has mammal's hair. Just like the Uma-ay, the bird also mimics the human voice but its favorite sound is the cry of a newborn baby.

The natives call the creature Ukang (owl) or gulus (ghost). This nocturnal bird is often heard making noise at night but only a few elders have actually seen it. Tribe members believe that the Uma-ay mimics the human voice to drive away the Kalumbata (monkey-eating eagle), which regularly hover in the area in search for food. It is said that Uma-ays would simultaneously sound their laughter to confuse the marauding eagles.

# OBITUARIES

## Sir Edmund Hillary 1919-2008

Sir Edmund Percival Hillary KG, ONZ, KBE is best known as the explorer and mountaineer who, along with Tenzing Norgay, was the first person to reach the summit of the world's highest mountain and complete a successful descent.

Hillary was born in Auckland, New Zealand on the 20<sup>th</sup> July 1919, the grandson of 19<sup>th</sup> Century émigrés from Yorkshire, England. He excelled in his primary school and gained a place at Auckland Grammar School two years early. Hillary did not perform as well at the grammar school, obtaining only average marks, and felt out of place and shy among the older and taller boys. This led him to retreat into daydreams and adventure books, taking advantage of the daily two hour train journey to and from school to further immerse himself in his imaginary world of exploration, adventure and derring-do. He was unaware just how real his dreams would one day become. It was at this time Hillary sought to gain confidence by learning how to box. It was as a result of his regular boxing training that Hillary found out, during a school trip when he was 16 years old to Mount Ruapehu, he had much greater strength and physical endurance than his peers. The school trip sparked his interest in mountaineering enough for him to take it up seriously.

Hillary was part of Eric Shipton's 1951 Everest reconnaissance expedition where they were among the first Westerners to explore and map the Rolwaling Himal. From this achievement, most of the expedition team, including Hillary went on to



attempt to reach the summit of the 6<sup>th</sup> highest mountain in the world, Cho Oyu in 1952. The Cho Oyu expedition was to fall into difficulties due to there being no clear route the climbers could follow from the Nepalese side of the mountain. The climbers found their route blocked by an ice cliff at

6,650m and after trying to surmount this obstacle for some time without success came to the wise decision to abandon the attempt on Cho Oyu's summit. An Austrian led team would conquer the mountain in 1954.

For their third expedition to the Himalayas in 1953 the team were privileged to be allowed to make an attempt on the summit of Mount Everest by the Government of Nepal. The Nepalese government only allowed one attempt to be made on the peak a year and it was the ninth attempt by a British led team. Previous attempts at the summit of Everest included Mallory and Irvine's 1924 attempt, and a 1933 attempt by the Marquess of Clydesdale to fly over the summit and plant a

Union flag. All attempts had failed, although it is still debated whether Mallory and Irvine had reached the summit before their deaths on the mountain. Originally Shipton, the leader of the team's last two expeditions, was planning to lead the 1953 expedition and, after he pulled out, Hillary considered doing the same, but the new leader, John Hunt, and Shipton, convinced him to stay. Hunt decided upon two teams of two climbers that would make an attempt on the summit itself from the four hundred man expedition team he had put together. The first pair was Tom Bourdillon and Charles Evans, who were in the future to conquer Kangchenjunga the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest mountain in the world. The second team was Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay, who had been involved in an unsuccessful Swiss attempt to reach the summit the previous year, and in 1947 an attempt with Earl Denman that reached 6,700m.

The Everest expedition was very much a team effort, with several mountaineers other than Hunt, Bourdillon, Evans, Hillary and Norgay playing an important role, in particular Hillary's friend George Lowe who helped prepare the teams route over several of the more treacherous rock faces. The team made their final base camp at 7,890m in March 1953 and Bourdillon and Evans proceeded with their attempt on the summit on the 26<sup>th</sup> of May. The pair returned to camp after their oxygen system failed only 91 vertical metres from the summit; this left the way clear for Hillary and Tenzing's successful attempt on the 28<sup>th</sup> of May. News that the British-led expedition had made it to the summit filtered though to the UK on the day of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, who knighted Hillary and Hunt for their achievement. According to some sources Norgay was not knighted because the Indian prime minister refused permission, which - if true - is an incredibly shameful state of affairs. Norgay was, however, awarded the British Empire Medal for

his efforts.

Hillary didn't stop at Everest; he climbed ten other peaks in the Himalayas, led the second ever successful expedition to the south pole and back, flew a plane to the south pole with Neil Armstrong (becoming the first man to ever have stood on both poles and the highest point on land) and led a jet boat expedition from the mouth of the river Ganges to the source. He also had a political career including four years as the New Zealand High Commissioner to India, and as a philanthropist after he founded the Himalayan trust, to improve living conditions for the Sherpa people by providing better healthcare and education. He also criticised the attitudes of modern climbers of Everest, particularly after several mountaineers allegedly left 34 year old David Sharp dying rather than interrupt their own attempts to reach the summit in 2006. Hillary said:

*"I think the whole attitude towards climbing Mount Everest has become rather horrifying. The people just want to get to the top. They don't give a damn for anybody else who may be in distress and it doesn't impress me at all that they leave someone lying under a rock to die."* Something that seems to have been pushed under the carpet about Hillary is his interest in the yeti; most of the popular press obituaries of him make no mention of the fact that he led an expedition to the Himalayas in 1960 to look at evidence for the mysterious hominid's existence. The expedition took the yeti scalp from Khumjung monastery to a Chicago university to be examined and it was concluded that, as Hillary had suspected, the supposed scalp was a fake made of serow skin. Alleged yeti footprints were explained as distorted human footprints and sightings of the animal by Sherpas were deemed invalid, as they made no distinction between the material world

and the supernatural. Hillary's personal opinion after the expedition was that the yeti was not a flesh and blood creature but rather one rooted in the mythology of the Sherpa people.

Sir Edmund Hillary died on the 10<sup>th</sup> of January 2008 of heart failure aged 88. Flags were lowered to half-mast on all New Zealand public buildings as a mark of respect.

## Verity Lambert 1935-2007

In the 1950s TV and film science fiction had become, pretty much, a painting by numbers exercise. You usually had a blond chisel jawed American armed with a gun who would fight against the same evil-communist like aliens each week. Occasionally there were gems like *Flash Gordon* but by the time the 60s came along cracks were beginning to show, although sci-fi was still a much-loved genera, especially among young boys. Sci-fi got the shot in the arm it needed when in 1963 Lambert co-created *Doctor Who* with Sidney Newman, Donald Wilson, C.E. Webber, Anthony Coburn and David Whitaker. *Doctor Who* was different to anything that had gone before in TV Sci-fi, taking its cue more from H.G. Wells than 50's B movies with a dash of British eccentricity and whimsy. The show was also intended to be partially educational, as episodes set in the past would provide a medium to introduce a bit of history to children while entertaining at the same time, very sneaky. During Lambert's reign as *Doctor Who*'s original producer the show became a massive hit and paved the way directly or indirectly for other original sci-fi shows in Britain and the United States of America. Without *Dr Who*, it is unlikely that *Star Trek* or a raft of other shows

would have been given the green light. Lambert was executive producer for 1966-67 series *Adam Adamant Lives!* a series where an Edwardian adventurer was frozen in 1902 and thawed out in the 60s and joined in the fight against organised crime, which formed a large part of the inspiration for Mike Myers' Austin Powers trilogy and provided inspiration for the stage name of a certain 'dandy highwayman'. She left the BBC in 1969 after being head-hunted by Thames Television and Euston Films before starting her own successful production company, Cinema Verity, in 1985, which was responsible for *Jonathan Creek* and her last production *Love Soup*.

## Steve Fossett 1944-2007(missing) 2008(declared legally dead)

James Stephen Fossett was an American adventurer and aviator, best known for being the first man to fly around the world non-stop, in a hot air balloon. Fossett made his fortune on the stock exchange and worked solidly on it until he decided there was more to life than just money and started craving adventure and physical activity as he had in his youth. To participate in sporting pursuits he initially took holidays of six weeks a year from his job before he started to run his business from afar in 1990.

It was after this that Fossett focussed on attempts to break records in sailing and aviation. His single greatest achievement came when he circumnavigated the world in a hot air balloon in 2002, which his friend Richard Branson, with whom he had made a previous attempt to circumnavigate the world with, helped plan. He also holds the world record for the longest

continuous aircraft flight without refuelling, 72 hours, in one of Branson's Virgin Atlantic global flyer planes. Fossett set a staggering 93 aviation records in a variety of different aircraft, and 23 world sailing records and is recognised by the World Sailing Speed Record Council as "the world's most accomplished speed sailor." As well as his world records, he also set cross country skiing records, climbed the highest mountain on every continent but Mount Everest, which he could not climb because of his asthma. He also completed the Paris to Dakar rally, and completed in the Le Mans 24 hour race twice, completed several marathons, the Iron Man Triathlon in Hawaii and swam the English Channel.

Fossett is thought to have died in September 2007, after the probable crash of his biplane in a remote area of the Nevada/California border. The resulting search uncovered eight other crash sites, some decades old, but has - to date - failed to find Fossett himself, or his plane. Missing, presumed dead, Fossett was declared legally dead on the 15<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

## Scott Norman 1964-2008

Scott T. Norman was, as Loren Coleman put it, 'one of the good guys'. A childhood interest in dinosaurs led to his adult life as a cryptozoologist and especially to his interest in Mokele-mbembe and other creatures theorised by some to be surviving dinosaurs.

Scott created a web page about mokele-mbembe in 1996 and upon searching for more information on cryptozoology was shocked to find very little so started his own general cryptozoology website; Cryptozoological Realms. It was through this site he soon came into contact with a number of other



cryptozoologists including Bill Gibbons with whom he started to plan expedition. Norman became president of Cryptosafari, and in 2001 ran a joint expedition with the British Columbia Scientific Cryptozoology Club to Cameroon to investigate sightings of the Mokele-mbembe there. Whilst in Cameroon, as well as collecting several new witness testimonies of the mokellembe, Norman and the expedition team were told for the first time about a three-toed biped called the Dodu. Scott Norman was later, like Jonathan and Richard, ridiculed in the *Penn and Teller Bullshit* TV show upon cryptozoology, a show that certainly lived up to its name, but not for the reasons the two American tricksters would have you believe. However, when the best thing Penn and Teller can come up with against you is that you like dinosaurs and wear a really good hat, it is clear that you must be doing something right!

Scott was a deeply religious man and also part of a Community Emergency Response Team that helped out in last autumn's Californian wild fires.

Norman died suddenly of a suspected blood clot on the 29<sup>th</sup> of February, aged 43, and will be much missed by the American and international cryptozoological community.

## Jeremy Beadle (1948-2008)

Jeremy James Anthony Gibson Beadle MBE was born in Hackney, London in the United Kingdom on the 12th of April. He was raised by his mother and never met his father, and suffered from Poland



syndrome that caused his right hand to wither at an early age. He embarked upon a career in the media in 1974 when he promoted the Bickershaw Rock Festival and soon made his way onto radio where he would often present quirky segments in programs and from there became chairman on the radio quiz *Animal, Vegetable or Mineral*. Beadle also worked as a researcher and writer for several television shows and soon started to present them.

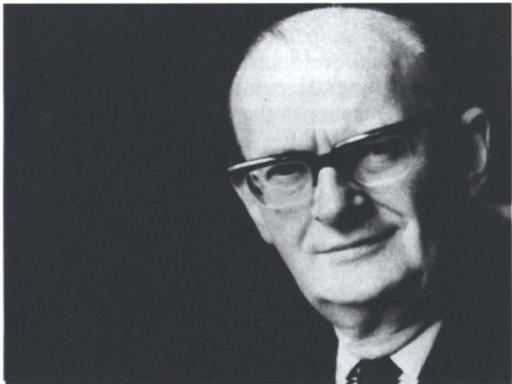
He was best known for his television shows like *Beadle's About* featuring elaborate practical jokes. Because Beadle was a lifelong lover of all things strange, pranks would often feature a bizarre set-up, like a taxi driver who - through Beadle's planning - was made to believe he was the prophesied messiah of a cult, and a woman who was convinced that a badly made plastic alien was a visitor from another planet, even to the point where she started to sing to it and offered it a cup of tea. He always chose his subjects carefully to make sure the joke wouldn't upset them after he turned up to tell the person they had been 'Beadled' and the people he chose generally felt that the fact that Jeremy Beadle had played a prank on them was like a badge of honour.

Beadle was also a fortean with a huge collection of books, allegedly numbering over 20,000. His friend Ken Campbell described it as the 'Beadlien library', (a pun on the world-famous Bodleian Library in Oxford). Beadler was a supporter of many fortean groups, and - without asking for any recognition - supported several financially.

Beadle was a one-man army for charities personally raising funds in excess of £100,000,000 for children with leukaemia, the Philip Green memorial trust and *Reach*, a charitable organisation he was the patron of. *Reach* helped offer support and advice to children with hand and arm deficiencies, like Beadle's

own, and was very important to him. Beadle would tell fellow sufferers he met that it wasn't the size of your hand that was important but the size of your heart... If that is true than Jeremy Beadle was hugely important.

## Sir Arthur C. Clarke (1917-2008)



Sir Arthur Charles Clarke CBE was born in Minehead, Somerset, in the United Kingdom on the 16th of December 1917. He was one of the world's most read science fiction authors, an invertor and a Futurist. He became interested in space exploration, and the technology associated with it, through his childhood interest in astronomy, and although he was not the inventor of the geo-stationary satellite, was the first person to suggest the idea of using them to convey telecomm-unication signals around the globe. The orbit that telecommunication satellites take over the earth is now recognised as the Clarke Orbit as a result of his pioneering work.

Clarke will be most fondly remembered for his science fiction stories, which included *2001: A*

*Space Odyssey* and *Rendezvous With Rama* and his works of non-fiction which often focused on the Fortean. It was one of his non-fiction books, *'Arthur C. Clarke's Mysterious World'* that shared the first western reports of the Gambia's Ninkinanka with the western world, which would prove instrumental in the planning of the 2007 CFZ Gambia expedition. However, his fictional titles were often of fortean interest as well. *The Deep Range* (1957) told the story of a scientific hunt for a sea-serpent, *The City and the Stars* (1956), had as a sub plot a lake monster which functioned much like a colonial hydroid, spending much of its life cycle as a disparate collection of polyps, and *Songs of Distant Earth* (1986) entered a philosophical debate about the true meaning of intelligence, as it introduced a species of giant lobsters on a distant planet, that were showing the early signs of tool-using.

Clark's later life in Sri Lanka (he had emigrated there in 1956) was not without its problems. He was wheelchair-bond with post-polio syndrome from 1998, and ironically, his scuba diving school was destroyed by the waves of the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami. His greatest trial was to come in 1988 after the *Sunday Mirror* newspaper accused him of paedophilia, despite being 70 and almost permanently wheelchair bound at the time.

The Sri Lankan police investigated the matter and found the paper's allegation to be untrue and the *Sunday Mirror* printed a retraction of the story soon after. However, by this time the damage to Clarke's reputation had been done and in 1990 he requested that the ceremony to award him his knighthood be postponed because of his ill health and his personal fears that people may still believe the lies that the *Sunday Mirror* had written about him. He died, aged 90, on the 19th of March 2008 after suffering from breathing problems.

## OBITUARIES BY OLLLEWIS



Last year, I was asked if I would write an inside-cover blurb for a then-forthcoming book titled *A Wizard's Bestiary* by Oberon Zell-Ravenheart. Well, at the time of the inquiry Oberon (a renowned wizard in his own right and the author of *Grimoire for the Apprentice Wizard*) sent me a Word document of various sections of the book; and after reading them, I knew that this was going to be a good one, and so I quickly sent off my blurb.

And the book is now in print, I'm extremely pleased to say, courtesy of New Page Books. For a very reasonable price you get a 360-page title that is as magical as it is fascinating, and that is as informative as it is thought-provoking. I don't joke or exaggerate when I say that *A Wizard's Bestiary* is likely to become one of the most talked about cryptozoological books of the next few years.

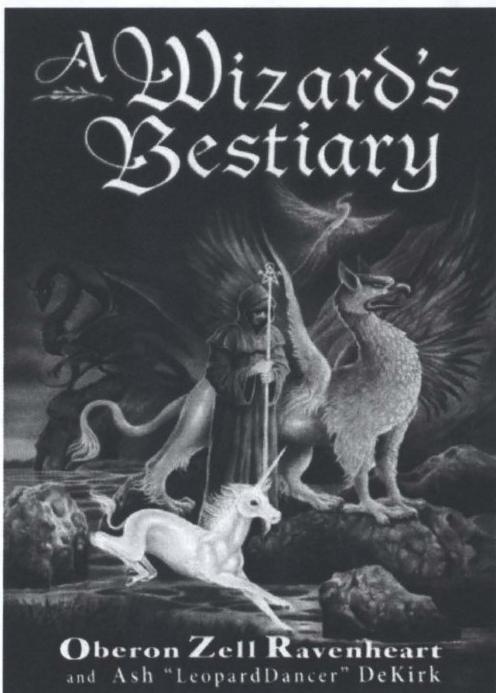
Not only that: Oberon's book is packed (and I do mean packed) with cool drawings, old woodcuts and ancient engravings on all things bizarre and monster-driven. Indeed, I'd say that the book averages about 5 illustrations per page. That's right: not 5 per chapter, but 5 per page.

Picking up and reading the book is very much like delving into some ancient magical tome of a type that would sit very well within the pages of a classic tale of Lovecraftian proportions. So, with

all that said, precisely what is the book about? Well, basically, it's an encyclopedic study of countless unknown beasts that range from the cryptozoological to the fantastic and the magickal.

The mainstream cryptozoologist will find much of interest here, including (A) detailed sections on such hairy man-beasts as Bigfoot, the Yeti, the Almas, and the Yowie; (B) a wealth of data (and great imagery) on sea-serpents and lake-monsters; (C) tales of mystery big-cats; (D) sightings of unidentified flying winged things of both a giant bird and pterodactyl-style; (E) reports of the devilish Black Dogs of old; and (F) encounters with still-living dinosaurs and much more.

Reports of magical entities such as Unicorns, Basilisks, Gryphons, the Phoenix, Satyrs and Centaurs are all addressed in-depth; as are the



# A Wizard's Bestiary

'Plantimals' - animate-plants, as the book describes them, and which yet again create wonderful Lovecraftian-style imagery in the mind's eye.

I could go on and on about this book all day long. But, suffice to say, this is definitely one of the most significant monster titles of recent years and one that, in terms of both its subject matter and its approach, is unlikely to be eclipsed. Magical, informative, monstrous and engaging, *A Wizard's Bestiary* is one to read late at night, when the wind howls and the moon is full...

## An Atypical American Bigfoot Hunt

From what I've seen and heard about this intriguing, forthcoming film - titled *Not Your Typical Bigfoot Movie* it's as much a story of human-interest as it is a quest to find Bigfoot.

As the synopsis for the story states at the film's official website:

[Http://notyourtypicalbigfootmovie.com](http://notyourtypicalbigfootmovie.com), it's:

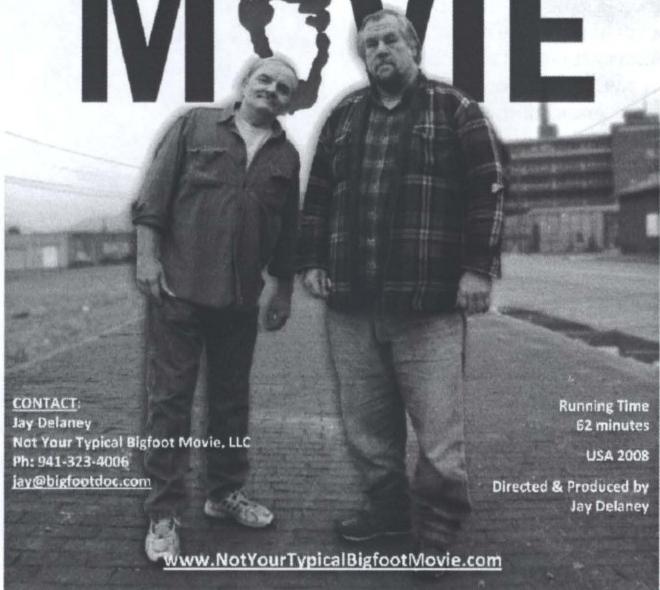
*"...a look at the trials and triumphs of life in the Appalachian foot hills. Through the experiences of Dallas and*

*Wayne, two amateur Bigfoot researchers in southern Ohio, we see how the power of a dream can bring two men together in friendship and provide hope and meaning that transcend the harsh realities of life in a dying steel town."*

I'm guessing the film may split the Bigfoot-seeking community into two camps: those who think that on-screen Bigfoot-related profiles

DO YOU BELIEVE IN THE AMERICAN DREAM?

# NOT YOUR TYPICAL BIGFOOT MOVIE



#### CONTACT:

Jay Delaney  
Not Your Typical Bigfoot Movie, LLC  
Ph: 941-323-4006  
[jay@bigfootdoc.com](mailto:jay@bigfootdoc.com)

Running Time  
62 minutes

USA 2008

Directed & Produced by  
Jay Delaney

[www.NotYourTypicalBigfootMovie.com](http://www.NotYourTypicalBigfootMovie.com)

should be done in a more traditional fashion; and those who think that a change from the typical formula-driven shows that dominate our TV channels is a welcome breath of fresh air. I'm in the second category.

## Texas Wild Men

Issue 233 of Fortean Times includes an article from me on the subject of a famous Texan monster legend: namely that of the Wild Man of the Navidad. Debate rages as to whether or not this was some sort of feral person, a Bigfoot-like entity, or something stranger. But whatever it was, it caused a hell of a fuss 'down yonder' (as my Texan grandmother-in-law is fond of saying) in the 1800s.

And the reason for my article on this two-centuries-old case: it has just become the subject of a brand new fictional film titled, not surprisingly, *The Wild Man of the Navidad*. I recently had the opportunity to view the film and interview the crew, and had a 'mighty fine time' (as my Texan grandmother-in-law is also fond of saying!) doing so.

Hopefully this Texan monster will be coming to a cinema near you soon. For more information,

see: [www.wildmanofthenavidad.com](http://www.wildmanofthenavidad.com)

Nick Redfern runs the US Office of the CFZ and can be contacted at his blog, There's Something in the Woods (see: <http://monsterusa.blogspot.com>)

**FROM THE PRODUCER OF THE 70'S HORROR CLASSIC "THE TEXAS CHAIN SAW MASSACRE"**

For years, the town of Sublime, Texas was terrorized by a mysterious creature lurking in the deadly woods. The lucky ones lived to tell about it.

"**THE  
WILD  
MAN  
OF  
THE  
NAVIDAD**"

Based on the journals of Dale S. Rogers

History tells one story.  
Truth tells another.

Starring  
JUSTIN MEIKS • ALEX GARCIA • CHARLIE HURTT • EDMUND SEYER • STACY MEIKS • KIM HENKEL  
MAC McBRIDE • BOB WOOD • JAMES BARSTYL • PATRICK HEWITT • TONY WILLIAMS  
Directed by JUSTIN MEIKS • Produced by KIM HENKEL, DIANE GRAVES  
Written by KIM HENKEL, DIANE GRAVES, JUSTIN MEIKS, ROXANNE ROBERTSON, JUSTIN WEEKS  
Based on the journals of DALE S. ROGERS  
Music by DIANE GRAVES • Cinematography by ROXANNE ROBERTSON, JUSTIN MEIKS  
Edited by DIANE GRAVES • Visual Effects by JACK MEIKS • Music by JAMES MORRIS  
James Brand, Charlie Hurtt, Ben Buchanan, Marshall A. Jones

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# MYSTERY CATS DIARY



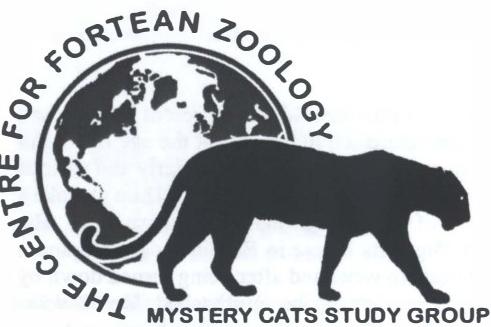
Corinna Downes

On Friday, 7th March 2008 Chris Moiser, Jane Bassett and I, opened up the gates of Tropiquaria near Minehead, Somerset to the third Big Cats in Britain [BCIB] Conference. It was to be a weekend of interesting and informative talks on the varied subjects of big cats in this country and of other mystery cats worldwide. Jonathan was compere for the weekend and opened the proceedings on Friday evening before the event kick-started with an opportunity for local people to come along and share some of their experiences. A couple of workshops also took place to allow those attending to meet each other and relax in the shared convivial atmosphere.

Unfortunately, the BCIB official organiser of this fairly new annual event, Mark Fraser, could not make the trip down as he had succumbed to back problems a few days before the weekend and was laid up flat on his back in bed. He was very upset not to be able to make it, but I am sure he is pleased as to how well it all went.

Saturday's programme included talks (in no particular order) by Jon McGowan, who showed photographic evidence of big cat presence in Dorset in the form of scats and the remains of deer. Considering there were quite a few photos of cat poo it was very interesting to see how you can determine the cat's diet and even what type of cat the poo had exited from. He also talked of a trip to Portland where it was fairly clear that there was a cat in residence again due to scats and remains of wildlife. Darren Naish gave a talk on the existence of various big cats in Europe in the Pleistocene and Holocene periods including evidence of lynx being present in the north of England as late as 7 AD and possibly even later. Again, another very interesting talk, although I

was a bit confused with the scientific words, but once my ear and brain kicked in properly it all made perfect sense. Chris Hall talked about cat sightings in Teesside and Richard Freeman spoke of mystery cats and cat-like creatures of the world. He has made many trips abroad with the CFZ on the hunt for mystery animals and whilst in these places often hears of other creatures. He told the audience of the cigau (pronounced chigow) - a cat-like beast he was told about whilst in Sumatra, and the discovery, on a tiny island near





Japan, of a small cat perhaps a cloudy leopard like those that used to be found in Taiwan - and the water-tiger in Guyana amongst others. The conference was honoured to welcome Nigel Brierly, who is a respected veteran in the research into big cats, and he talked briefly on melanism in pumas.

Marcus Matthews told those present how he had become interested in big cats at the age of 13 and had been in contact with Nigel Brierly and various local newspapers. This had inspired him to make a record of big cat sightings in his spare time. His book *Big Cats Loose in Britain* took three and a half years to write and after being turned down by various publishers, he approached Jon Downes here at the CFZ, who was only too happy to do the

honours as he had heard so much about it - it had become almost legendary.

One of the great things about having the conference at Tropiquaria was that in between the talks you could walk around such wonderful surroundings. During the break for lunch it was a pleasure to amble around outside in the fresh air chatting to those animals in residence, and at the end of the proceedings on Saturday evening, there was a twilight tour, given by Chris and Jane, around the Tropical Hall as the birds roosted, for those who wished so to do. There is something very magical about the Tropical Hall at that time of day, it is a pleasure to sit amongst the foliage and listen to the various calls from the birds residing there. The visitors were also taken down

to the aquarium area, and shown the collection of fish, spiders, tortoises etc.

We all met up in The Washford Inn for dinner where we all enjoyed chatting about the day's events and had a good time until the early hours.

On Sunday morning there was a tour around the zoo by Chris Moiser, and some lucky people were able to enter the lemur cages and see the animals 'up close and personal'. I have also done this, and believe me, it is a great privilege to be able to be in such close proximity with such beautiful creatures. After the lunch break, it was the turn of Alan White to take the stage and he reported on sightings in south and east Devon. Charlie McGuiness spoke of sightings in N Ireland, and Marcus Matthews on sightings in Wiltshire. Shaun Stevens spoke about some photographs and sightings in Argyll. He had set up some trip cameras and apart from the usual wildlife photos had managed to get a strange black cat photographed. He is convinced there is more than one animal as, in some photographs, it seems to be jet black and in others it seems to have a white flash. He has done measurements from the photographs and it would appear to be around 2ft long from head to base of back feet with a 12-15in tail. He has seen nothing like it before, and his gut feeling is that it is a very large feral cat. It turns out that this has also been seen by many other people in the area. The odd thing about the cat is that it seems to hold its tail horizontally rather than 'up' in the usual fashion. It has been seen near the area where big cats have been seen with cubs on the beach or chasing dogs. He has no idea whatsoever what it is, but it is definitely not one of the usual cats reported, such as a panther.

After the drawing of the raffle, Rick Minter summed up of the weekend and the event was closed, with thanks to those attending, by Jonathan Downes.

Some of those attending left immediately for home, but some had decided to extend their visit for another evening. We had been warned of severe storms on the way, and although our journey home seemed to contradict this ominous warning with vivid blue sky, there was a certain stillness in the air that could well have been the 'calm before the storm' as - after being home for about an hour - you could hear the wind gradually building up outside and by the time midnight came by, the wind was howling and the rain was crashing against the window panes with such ferocity that I was glad to be tucked up under the duvet and not out on an oil rig!

I hope that those who delayed their journey home until the Monday morning all got back safe and well in what must have been extremely horrendous travelling conditions.



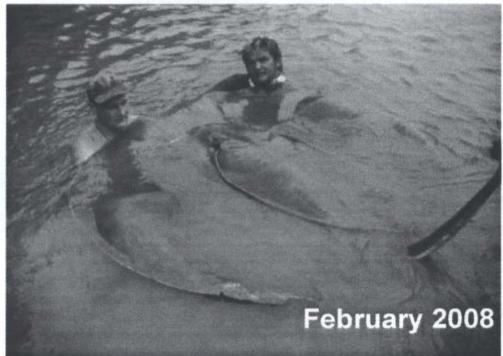
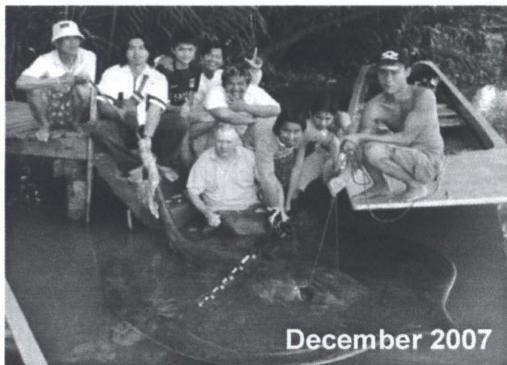
# AQUATIC MONSTERS LOG BOOK



BY OLL LEWIS

## STAND BY FOR ACTION!

In December, what is thought to be one of the largest examples of a freshwater stingray ever



found in Asia was caught in Thailand.

Tom Parker from Coventry in the UK caught the freshwater whipray, *Himantura chaophraya* on a rod and line whilst fishing on the Ban Pakong River some 80km east of Bangkok.

The gigantic ray has a wingspan of 2.4m (7ft10ins) and weight was estimated to be in the region of 200kg (31½ stone). It took Parker an hour to land the ray, which was released once its



[www.cfz.org.uk](http://www.cfz.org.uk)

wingspan had been measured, and photographs had been taken.

Other large freshwater whiprays of comparable size have been caught in the same area including a 130kg (20½ stone) ray in February 2008 and the largest whipray to be caught using a rod in 2005.

The ray caught in 2005 was caught in the Maeklong River and weighed 230kg (36¼ stone) was also released again soon after its capture.

## I'm a SHAAARK!

Last year's great white hoax created a media scrum when the *Sun* newspaper printed photos of a great white shark in Cornish waters. The footage had, in fact, been taken by a holidaymaker in South Africa and the tabloid was left with egg on its face, after this was revealed in the *Daily Star*.

It is possible that great white sharks could survive in British coastal waters during the summer, there just hasn't been any decent evidence of the sharks straying that far from their nearest known haunts of the Mediterranean Sea. However, a recent discovery could change all that.

In late December 2007 a lifeboat crew found something waiting for them on the slipway in Sheringham, Norfolk; A grey seal with a huge



chunk bitten out of it. Lifeboat man Chris Taylor, who has a degree in biology and has studied sharks noticed that the seals injuries were very indicative of an attack by a large shark.

Taylor said: "*You can see the serrated tooth marks. There are large basking sharks around here, but they have no teeth. This is very different. It is a very clean cut, and from the size of the chunk, and the serrated tooth marks, it must be something with a very large bite radius like a great white. The position of the bite mark is also crucial. The seal was bitten from underneath, which is exactly what you would expect because of how a shark takes its prey.*"

Dr Ken Collins, of the National Oceanography Centre, Southampton was given close up photographs of the bite to examine and confirmed that the bite was most likely to have been made by a large shark that came in fast and attacked the animal. Collins said that a great white shark was one of a very small number of possible suspects and not one that could be discounted.

Given the time that has passed it is unlikely that the seal carcass is still extant and the reports give no indication that it was preserved so the chances are that it will never be examined closely enough by an expert to be able to say with conviction what species of shark most likely caused the damage. It is a possibility though, that if great white sharks are feeding around British coasts another body might turn up someday.

## THE 'THING' OF ST CHARLES

It sounds like the plot for one of those large wild animal horror movies that were all the rage in the

early part of the 21st Century but this time its real...

Near the small rural village of St Charles, Trinidad, local tales warn to stay away from the marshes and ponds found in the grounds of a nearby abandoned sugar cane plantation. Fishermen steer clear of the place where they once fished, prayers are no longer said on the water's edge, and even the local water birds are no longer seen. The place has an eerie silence broken only by the susurruus of the wind blowing through the old sugarcane. The boycott of the lake has been caused by a creature locals call the 'Thing'. Local man Elvis Foster saw the thing in 2007. Foster was fishing in a marshy area beside the large pond at twilight up to his knees in the tall grass of the eastern bank when he encountered the Thing:

*"I was holding guabine. I saw it swimming. It came up, then went under. And it started getting closer and closer. Nothing moves like that but a snake, a very, very big snake. I didn't wait to draw no sketch. I leave everything, line, rod, net, and run."*

Foster said the 'Thing' had a smooth black head about the size of a football, with white eyes that glistened in the darkness. Rumours about the snake in St Charles, include it having been an anaconda that was being kept as a pet by an unknown local that grew too large, to the snake having grown to gargantuan size after being fed entrails from the local poultry business.

## A CROCODILE SANDWICH AND MAKE IT SNAPPY

In the last issue of *Animals & Men* I reported an out of place crocodile or alligator that had been seen in the Northern United States in July 2007 (AM:42,

*Close The Gators*). The animal was first seen by a boy named Andrew Kapono when he was fishing and the animal had tried to jump onto the jetty he was standing on. The park was closed for a time as a result, and a number of other people in the area have also seen the crocodilian, most estimating it to be around 7ft in length.

The traps that the Colorado Division of Wildlife set up to catch the creature were unsuccessful and it is thought that the animal is probably dead by now because of the excessively cold winter.

However, it was somewhat better news for a crocodile in the Ukraine on the 28th of November last year when it was recaptured after spending six months at large. The crocodile, which escaped from a circus in May 2007, was frequently spotted lurking around industrial sites near the city of Mariupol.

## WHALE MEET AGAIN

On the 14th of November a minke whale beached itself in the River Amazon, 1600km (1000 miles) from the ocean. Locals walked out to the 12 ton endangered animal, and poured water over its





exposed back to stop it from drying out.

Conservationists started attempts to contain un-beach the animal and contain it in a small stretch of water on the 18th of November. It was then planned to put the whale on a boat so it could be taken back to the ocean but the whale broke free from its confinement. Its corpse was found on the 20th of November. Milton Marcondes, a vet with the Brazilian Humpback Whale Institute, has said that the whale's death was likely caused by illness brought on by stress from having been away from its natural environment for so long.

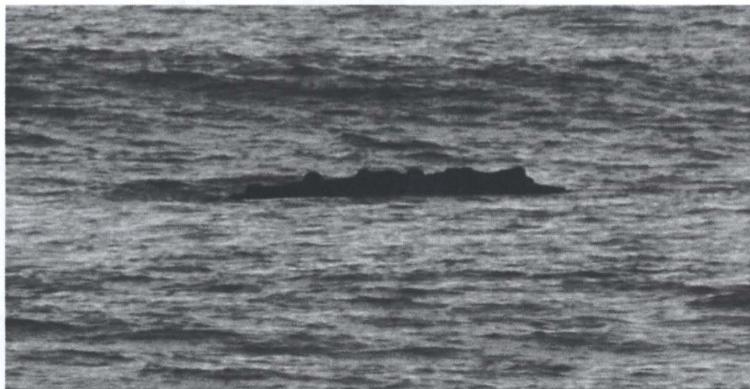
## TURTLE OR SEAMONSTER

In August, Argentine fishermen saw and photographed what they believe is a sea monster. They saw the creature's back rise up from the sea off the coast of Bahia de los Vientos, near to where a seamonster, that was

christened Joselito, was seen in March 1994.

Around 20 people, including Juan Iniguez, Carlos Miño and his son Fabián, saw the creature in 1994. Iniguez and the Miños said they had seen a black thing 10-12 metres from their boat as they pulled up their fishing nets. This sighting was collaborated by other nearby fishing vessels, and people with whom they were in radio contact. Joselito was apparently peaceful and showed no interest in the fishermen and their boat so they were able to view it for a few minutes, the fishermen said that they only ever saw part its back but it was very large and had staggered fins 'like a dinosaur'.

The 2007 sighting and photograph is of an animal approximately 2 metres long, and only the back of the creature breaks the surface of the water. Local news reports postulate that the image is that of a known animal, the leatherback turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) which it almost certainly correct. The 1994 sighting of Joselito may also have been of a leatherback turtle based on similarities between leatherbacks and the sighting. It is likely that the fishermen would not have recognised it when they saw it because



Argentena is outside of the leatherback's normal range, with individuals only turning up very rarely.

The largest leatherback turtle ever discovered measures almost 3m (9ft) in length and weighed 914kg (2,016 pounds) and is on permanent display in the National Museum of Wales in Cardiff.

## ROBERT RINES RETIRES

The Loch Ness Monster has been a media superstar ever since 1933 with the first modern sighting. In the modern history of Nessie several names stand out more than others, for a variety of reasons. One of the most well known personalities associated with the monster is Robert H. Rines, who announced his retirement this February.

Rines was born on the 30th of August 1922 in Boston, Massachusetts, USA. He took a Physics and Engineering degree at M.I.T but attempted to transfer to Harvard which led to a argument with his father and Robert ceased to attend his classes and flunked out.

His father was further angered by this, and threw Robert out of the house. Robert then got a job as a caretaker at the college, and attended summer classes so he could return to his studies. By 1942 Rines graduated top of his class and completed a PhD at National Chiao Tung University in Taiwan in 1972.

Rines has become known and respected in many different fields; he is an inventor, lawyer, musical composer and critically acclaimed director of several stage productions as well as a researcher and the founder of the Academy of Applied Science.

In 1971 Rines was at Loch Ness when he saw a 25

foot (7.62m) long grey 'hump' with elephant like skin texture gliding along the surface of the loch. He returned in 1972 to hunt for the monster using an ultra-sound radar imaging system he had helped to develop. Using his imaging equipment he found the WWII Wellington Bomber and took the now infamous flipper photograph. The original photograph taken by the imaging system showed a blurry series of fairly indistinct hits and this was taken to be computer enhanced by the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratories in Pasadena, this created a clearer picture of the captured anomaly that was still fairly indistinct. This photograph was then retouched by hand to closer resemble a flipper producing the most famous version of the photograph.

Opinion is divided on whether the picture received its final retouch from Rines' Academy of Applied Science team or from an editor who wanted to beef up the story. Either way the picture was used as fuel for the fires of sceptics, who used the flawed logic that if a picture has been retouched then it means that there is nothing strange at all in the loch.

More doubt was cast on Nessie at the time, when Sir Peter Scott gave the creature the preliminary binomial classification *Nessiteras Rhombopteryx* after seeing the pictures and noting the rhombus shape of the flipper, newspapers were quick to point out this was an anagram of 'Monster hoax by Sir Peter S'. Rines however pointed out that the name was also an anagram of 'Yes, both pix are monsters. R.'.

Rines himself is adamant that Nessie exists and has been on a number of other expeditions to Loch Ness in the hope of finding the elusive monster and is only retiring from the search because in his words he is running out of age.

# KICKING UP A SKINK



24.10.2007

Before Christmas we received this photograph from Dr David Conway, at the Malaria Council Research Laboratories in Banjul. His eMail read:

*"Thought you might be interested in this that we found yesterday on the MRC compound in Fajara."*

We are interested. Very much so. But what is it? Dr Conway reckons that it is an Armitage's skink - the species that (amongst other things) our 2006 expedition to The Gambia was looking for.

But we are not so sure.

Whereas the only museum specimen photograph that we have been able to uncover is of a long, snake-like creature similar to the six lined skink of

North America, whereas this animal is far fatter, and appears similar in morphology, if not in colouration to the ocellated skink from the Mediterranean.

Either an awful lot of what we have learned about Armitage's skink over the years is quite simply wrong. Or this lizard ain't an Armitage's skink. And if it ain't an Armitage's skink, what the bloody hell is it?

We await further developments with great interest, and are already planning how - in conjunction with *Tropiquaria* - we can go back to The Gambia, and solve the problem for good.

We will hopefully bring back a nucleus for a breeding population at the zoo.

# weird<sup>8</sup> weekend 2008



Yes, ladies and gentlemen, it is that time of year again. Plans are already well underway for this year's event, which will - we can promise - be bigger and better than ever.

Once again, it will be held in the Community Centre at Woolfardisworthy, North Devon, and once again - for the third year running - the weekend ticket price is a mere twenty quid in advance. Tickets are already selling fast, so I would strongly urge you all to buy your tickets well in advance, and also to book up your accommodation as, if last year was anything to go by, there will be no B&Bs available for love or money within miles of the village, by the time the weekend comes around.

We can - as always - promise you a magickal weekend, with nearly 20 guest speakers and an array of other activities for people of all ages. Bring your kids this year! The Weird Weekend is 100% family friendly, and we have a special range of activities for the younger generation.

# August 15-17

# ANIMALS & MEN - ISSUE 43

This timetable is ridiculously provisional, and that the CFZ take no responsibility for disappointment caused by the non-appearance of any of the advertised speakers

## THURSDAY

7.00 p.m Cocktail party at the CFZ

## FRIDAY

Open day at the CFZ 12-5.00 pm

Doors open at 6.00

7.00 - 7.15 Introduction

7.15 - 8.00 MATTHEW WILLIAMS:

Crop Circles

8.00-8.30 BREAK

8.30 - 9.00 RONAN COGHLAN:

The theology of extra-terrestrials

9.00 - 9.30 BREAK

---the scary zone ---

9.30 - 10.15 MIKE HALLOWELL/ DARREN RITSON:

The Tyneside poltergeist

10.15 - 11.00 LEE WALKER:

New Ferry after dark

## SATURDAY

doors open at 10.00

12.00 - 12.15 JON DOWNES + RICHARD FREEMAN:

An introduction to cryptozoology

12.15 - 1.00 MICHAEL WOODLEY:

In the wake of Bernard Heuvelmans

1.00 - 2.00 JOANNE CURTIS:

monster making for kids

1.00 - 2.00 NICK REDFERN:

Planet of the ape men

2.00 - 2.30 BREAK

2.30 - 2.45 QUIZ

2.45 - 3.15 NICK REDFERN:

UFOs for kids

2.45 - 3.45 Dr MIKE DASH:

In Search of Dr MacRae (Loch Ness)

3.45 - 4.15 BREAK (KIDS: Mad Hatter's Tea Party)

4.15 - 5.15 Dr GAIL-NINA ANDERSON:

Fairies in art

5.15 - 5.45 BREAK

5.45 - 6.15 PAUL VELLA:

Bigfoot for kids

5.45 - 6.45 TIM MATTHEWS:

Weird stuff happens

- my part in UFOLOGY's downfall

6.45 - 7.15 PAUL "Mr Biffo" ROSE:

A year in cryptozoology

7.15 - 8.00 BOOK LAUNCH:

'Dr Shuker's Casebook' by Dr. Karl Shuker

8.00 - 8.10 GRAHAM INGLIS:

CFZ Museum - annual report

8.10 - 8.20 PAUL VELLA -

the last 12 months in BHM

8.20 - 9.00 CHRIS MOISER:

Confessions of a fortean zookeeper

9.00 - 9.15 CFZ AWARDS

9.15 - 9.45 BREAK

9.45 - 10.30 RICHARD FREEMAN ET AL:

Guyana 2007 Expedition report

## SUNDAY

doors open 10.30

12.00 - 1.00 MATT SALUSBURY:

Water elephants of the Congo

1.00 - 1.30 BREAK

1.30 - 1.40 OLL LEWIS:

The last 12 months of lake  
and sea monster reports

1.40 - 2.30 MIKE HALLOWELL:

invizikids

(KIDS: Monsters are real

- Jon Downes/Richard Freeman 30 mins)

2.30 - 3.00 BREAK (KIDS: Treasure Hunt)

3.00 - 4.00 GEOFF WARD:

Spirals - the Pattern of Existence

3.00 - 3.30 OLL LEWIS: Lake Monsters for kids

4.00 - 4.30 BREAK

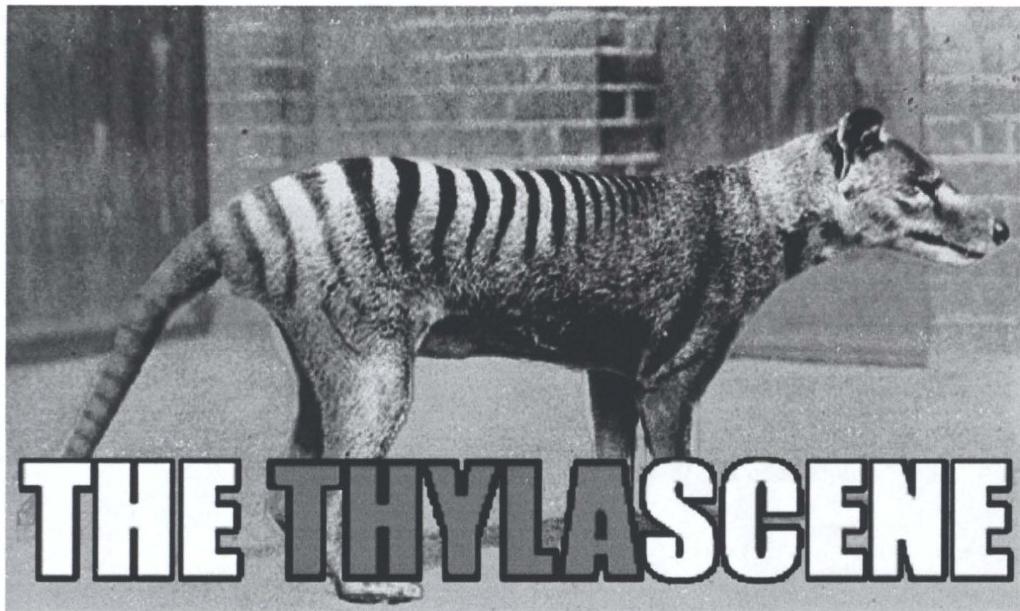
4.30 - 5.15 RONAN COGHLAN:

Irish UFO case

5.15 - 5.45 JONATHAN DOWNES:

Keynote Speech and Closing Remarks.

EVENING: Dinner at *The Farmer's Arms*



# THE THYLASCENE

It has been quite a long time since we did a round-up of Australian cryptozoology news.

And mystery marsupials have been in the news quite a lot lately, with a number of high profile, and unimpeachably academic investigations into the supposed extinction of the species. As the thylacine is the emblem of the CFZ, it is, we feel important that we dedicate a substantial portion of this issue of *Animals & Men* to a distillation of this latest bout of research projects, together with some other snippets of thylanews that we find of interest.

*triangular ears." Although she "couldn't see its tail ... it had blacky-brown stripes going down its back.*

When interviewed, she said: *"The stripes were going across its back, like a tiger, and they started about mid-back. They were more chocolatey than black, though...I saw it as I drove past, but the road was deserted so I was driving slowly, I saw it for about 3 seconds (count 3 seconds, it's longer than it sounds)". A friend of hers has reported seen what she believes are thylacine tracks in the area, whilst on horseback.*

Sydney amateur naturalist Chris Rehberg who runs 'Where Light meets Dark' has constructed an interactive map that allows would-be tiger hunters to keep tabs on the most recent alleged sightings.

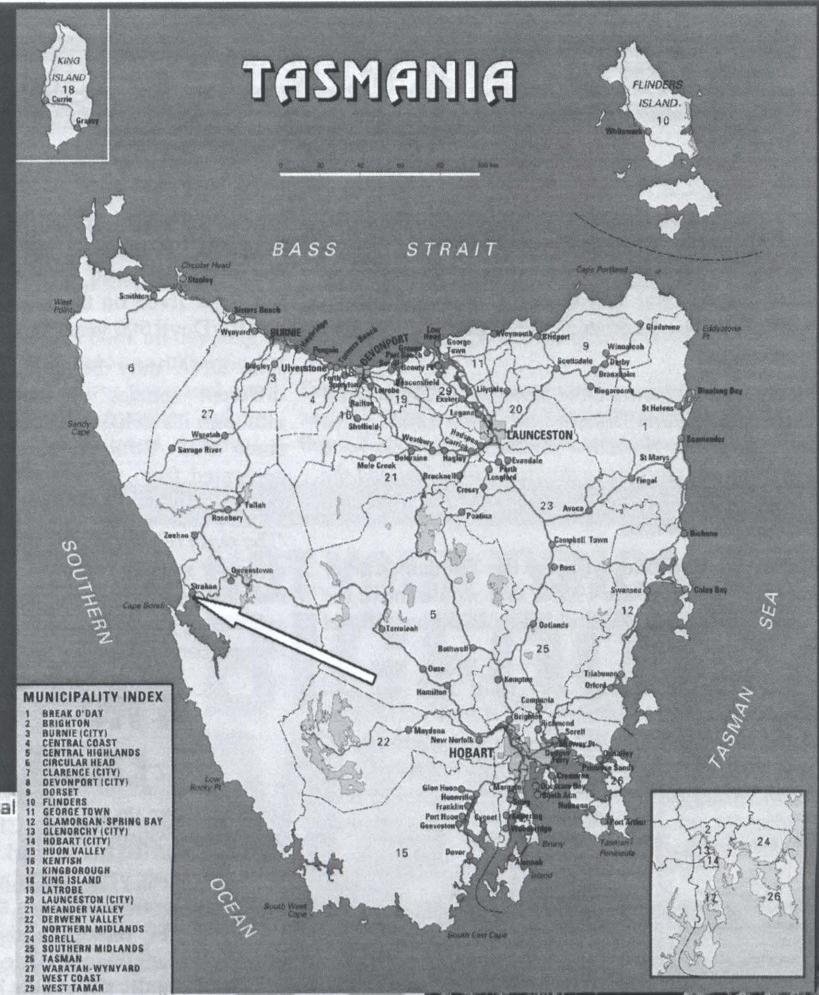
## THYLACINE ROAD KILL?

According to the 'Where Light meets Dark' website, On April 28th, 2007, Maddy Livingstone described a road-killed animal she saw whilst driving home from Brisbane two days before. Between Warwick and Stanthorpe that she saw a road killed animal *"about two or three feet long ... [with] a tawny color ... a canine shape and*

## SMILING FAECES

Zoologist Jeremy Austin of the Australian Center for Ancient DNA and his colleagues are examining DNA from animal droppings, or scats, found in Tasmania in the late 1950s and 1960s, which have been preserved in the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery.

# CORINNA



Eric Guiler, a thylacine expert who found the scats, told Austin the droppings probably came from a Tasmanian tiger rather than a dog or two common related marsupial carnivores - the well-known wolverine-like Tasmanian devil and the cat-like spotted quoll.

*"If we find thylacine DNA from the 1950s scats it will be significant," Austin said. "This would prove that either the thylacine produced the scat or a [Tasmanian] devil ate a thylacine and dropped the scat. Either way, that is proof that the thylacine was there at the time."*

If they were to find evidence the Tasmanian tiger was still extant in the 1950s, that would mean the beast was able to stay hidden from humans for at least 20 or 30 years.

*"If they could survive this long with no real physical proof, then it does add a little more hope to the possibility that they could survive another 50 years without ever being caught, killed [or] hit by a car," Austin told LiveScience. "This chance is of course not great, but the glimmer of hope is ever so slightly brighter."*



Dr Austin is also extracting DNA from bones of both the Tasmanian Tiger and Tasmanian Devil found on mainland Australia. Scientists believe the Tiger lived on the mainland 2000 years ago and the Devil 500 years ago.

'The DNA may be able to reveal they were different species to the Tasmanian animals, although it's unlikely. It's only been 10,000 years since Bass Strait flooded and Tasmania was separated from the mainland. That's not a long period of time in evolutionary terms.'

*'The main reason people think they may have been different species is that the Tasmanian Tiger was much bigger than its mainland cousins. That's not surprising given the climate because the colder the environment, the larger the animal.'*

## A ROMANTIC LEXILINK

As most of you will know, CFZ Director Jonathan Downes married his second wife Corinna in July

last year. What none of us realised - until now - was that 'Corinna' is also the name, in the Native Australian language, spoken by those people who really should not be called Aborigines any more, for a young thylacine. And, what's more, there is an old gold-mining town of the same name, surrounded by vast tracts of rainforest on the southern end of Tasmania's Tarkine wilderness.

Bounded by the Arthur River in the north and the Pieman River to the south, the Tarkine sprawls across about 350,000 hectares in the state's remote north-west. Although a river punt for cars resumed and a river

cruise began operating in the 1980s, Corinna remained largely neglected until late last year, when it was transformed into an outstanding wilderness getaway.

Corinna's six remaining cabins and old guesthouse have been restored and a further 14 rustic cabins - thankfully sympathetic in design with this pristine location - built, allowing an close-up glimpse of the Tarkine's glorious rainforest and incredible plant life.

\* Cabins at Corinna Wilderness Experience are priced from \$150, with double rooms at the old pub \$70 (off-season discounts of 15 per cent from May 1 to October 31). Pieman River breakfast cruise is \$50 adults, \$25 children, \$125 family, while Pieman Heads cruise is \$70 adults, \$35 children, \$175 family. For further information phone (03) 6446 1170, visit [www.corinna.com.au](http://www.corinna.com.au).

Strewnth, cobbers. We've given you a bonzerplug in this magnificent magazine of ours. Can we have a free holiday? Or at least can Jon and Corinna finally have a honeymoon?

## HUNTING CRYPTIDS WITH THEORETICAL ECONOMICS

In a move which reminds certain members of the CFZ editorial team of Isaac Asimov's theoretical discipline 'Psychohistory', as described in his magnificent 'Foundation' series, Dutch and U.S. environmental economists have combined biology and economics into a single mathematical model to re-evaluate whether demand for dead thylacines' 100 years ago drove the species to extinction in 1936, as scientists have long believed.

The economist's report in the latest issue of the journal Ecological Economics that "our results

*indicate that economic forces could not have led to the species' demise."*

Moreover, using an open access hunting model that simulates harvest levels and abundance of thylacines and human hunters over time, they claim their results "*support the view that tigers could still exist in the wilds of Tasmania today.*"

*"Such models exist for many species, including herring, whales and elephants,"* lead author Dr Erwin Bulte of Tilburg University in the Netherlands told ABC Science Online in an interview. *"But to our knowledge, this type of model has never been used to evaluate whether a species has gone extinct."*

From the 1830s to 1909, pastoral companies and governments in Tasmania paid bounties on the scalps of thylacines, as part of systematic programmes to exterminate the predator suspected of taking grazing livestock brought to the island by European settlers.

The economists offer hope to those who dream the thylacine may still be found. *"We estimate a significant wild population existed until the 1920s, and abundance might have been sufficient to ensure enduring survival,"* they write.

Their model uses biological elements such as the minimum viable population of thylacines, and assumes that the island's carrying capacity decreases over time as agriculture replaces habitat.

The economic parameters estimate harvest rate and the speed with which people switch jobs when they can increase their income. It assumes hunting effort increased when the returns of snaring became more attractive than other occupations, such as agriculture.

*"People adjust imperfectly - they don't go hunting right away when hunting appears profitable, and they don't give up hunting right away when*

*returns drop," Bulte said.* This gradual adjustment causes cycles in hunting behaviour and cycles in tiger abundance.

*"This pattern is seen in many resource harvesting industries, such as fisheries. Our model predicts that during these cycles, the population was never hunted down to such low levels that recovery was impossible," he said.*

The authors estimate a 'steady state' level of a remnant 779 animals after hunting ceased in 1909.

They used a Monte Carlo simulation - running the numerical model 5,000 times while randomly varying the parameter values - to check the robustness of this survival result.

*"We get 5,000 different predictions of harvesting and tiger abundance over time. There were no combinations of parameters that killed the tigers off," said Bulte. "If thylacines are extinct, it was probably not due to the bounty system alone."*

They calculated that a much greater level of bounty (more than five times higher than the £1.00 paid per scalp), or a 78% reduction in the labour wage rate, would have been required to entice enough hunting effort to drive the population below its minimum viable level.

Tasmania's entire carrying capacity for thylacines is estimated as between 2,000 and 4,000 animals, or a maximum of one pair in 50 to 60 square kms. Records show that just one tannery exported 3,482 skins to London between 1878 and 1896.

One Australian scientist disagreed with the findings, saying the model oversimplifies the thylacine's world and the complex forces of extinction.

Dr Stephen Wroe, a palaeontologist at University of Sydney, is researching the thylacine's extinction from mainland Australia around 3,000 years ago, and the impacts of competition with both dingoes and humans.

*"The thylacine went extinct [in Tasmania] for a whole raft of reasons, and the bounty system was one of them - others include loss of habitat, loss of preferred prey species, competition with feral dogs, disease, changing fire regimes ... the list goes on," he told ABC Science Online.*

*"But one thing is absolutely indisputable - European Australians drove it [to extinction]. The way in which this paper is crafted appears to suggest that this is not the case," Wroe said. "This is not only misleading, but damned irresponsible."*

Although we don't agree with Wroe's conclusion, and believe that the thylacine still exists, not only in Tasmania, but on the mainland as well, the more politically extreme amongst the *Animals & Men* staff tend to agree with his argument, suggesting that these findings could well be seen as the team trying to be apologists for the spread of 19th Century market forces. A sort of economic 'holocaust denial'.

We have noted that in recent years there has been somewhat of a backlash against environmentalists from the business world, with the captains of industry doing their best to prove that they are not as black as they have been painted. This is palpably wrong, and - as we see it - is part of the forces of international capitalism trying to renege on their responsibility for what they have done to this planet.

The authors conclude their paper with an important caveat: in order to better model the dynamics and recovery of Tasmania's thylacine population, they write, more spatial population data and a greater knowledge of migratory movements was needed.

*"In theory, such a model is feasible, but in practice the data requirements (on the biological side, but also on the economics side) are such that this is virtually impossible," said Bulte.*

## DINGO ATE MY BABY

(OK, it didn't, but we couldn't resist the headline)



**Thylacine skull (above)**

**Dingo skull (below)**

Yet another very respectable scientific investigation has claimed to have discovered how the dingo outperformed the thylacine as a hunter. Much though we may agree on political and polemical terms with Dr Stephen Wroe, research by an Australian team, led by University of New South Wales palaeontologist Dr Stephen Wroe, has found that although the thylacine had a more powerful and efficient bite, its skull anatomy meant it was restricted to eating smaller prey. This is diametrically opposite to the statement made by

Dr Wroe.

The extinction of the thylacine may have been driven by its inability to kill large prey, which placed it in direct competition with the dingo for food, new research shows.

An Australian team, led by University of New South Wales palaeontologist Dr Stephen Wroe, has found that although the Tasmanian tiger had a more powerful and efficient bite, its skull anatomy meant it was restricted to eating smaller prey.

The finding, published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society*, is based on computer simulations of the bite forces and stress patterns placed on dingo and thylacine skulls when biting struggling prey. Co-author Colin McHenry, of the University of Newcastle, says this helps clarify the basis for ecological competition between the larger Tasmanian tiger, or the thylacine, and the dingo.

"We would have thought the size of the predator's body would correlate to the size of the prey, but body size alone is not telling us the whole story," he says. "There's much more of an overlap with the dingo in terms of prey."

The demise of the species has been linked to the arrival of the dingo, about 4000 years ago, in combination with climate change and a shift in Aboriginal land-use patterns.

McHenry says in regions with large numbers of predators, such as Africa, there is little overlapping of prey, allowing animals to ecologically co-exist. But the introduction of the dingo to Australia meant the thylacine was suddenly competing with a more "*sophisticated predator*", that also hunted in packs, for the same food.

"History would support the view there wasn't room for both types of predators," he says.

The researchers used to computer technology to

model mechanical stresses and strains applying to the skull, jaw, teeth and cranial muscles of both animals. They studied a range of biting, tearing and shaking motions that simulated the impact of controlling and killing a struggling prey. Engineers use this same technique, known as finite threadysis, to test load-bearing materials such as plane wings and cars for possible distortion and failure.

*"At one level we found the skulls were very similar," says McHenry. "But we also found these differences that seem to be saying the thylacine wasn't brilliant at tackling large prey the way the dingos was."*

These differences were in the lower jaw and brain-case region of the skull.

## UP THE CREEK

Then, in December, there was another sighting. This time in the southern state of Victoria. A farmer at Freshwater Creek Harry Cook told of having watched the mysterious four-legged creature on Friday 7th at 4pm while showing a friend his property.

*"We looked into the valley and this strange animal was standing there, with three wedge-tail eagles circling above. It had a dirty grey coat with white stripes on its rib area. I thought, God, it's strange," he said. "When it saw us it went into a crouching run and took off into the creek."*

Mr Cook said the animal was about 1m tall with a small head, long legs and a slim build. He said the tail was upright and hairless, unlike anything he had

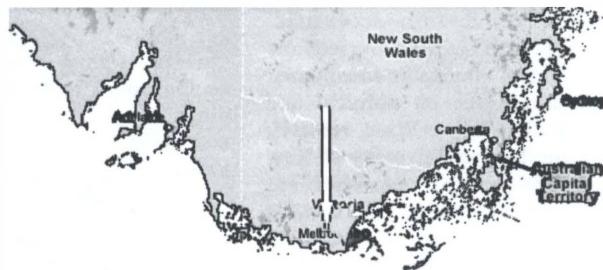
seen before. *"What I saw wasn't a fox, foxes don't stand that tall. It's a new kid on the block, I suppose,"* he said. Liz Wylie also reported seeing a similar creature on her nearby property in Modewarre.

The mum-of-three yesterday said she saw a striped animal three months ago casually walk past her horse being held in a paddock. *"I know what foxes look like and I know what wild dogs look like. This wasn't either of those,"* she said. Big cat researcher Simon Townsend said anything was possible but the animal was most likely a mangy fox. *"If it's showing stripes it may be suffering from problems with its coat,"* he said.

Mr Cook copped a lot of flak for reporting the peculiar sight, but not because no one believed him. *"Farmers around here told me I had broken the code of silence -- that they had seen things too, but as soon as it is reported all the townies come with their rifles trying to shoot it."*

Mr Cook is not alone in experiencing such a sighting.

A former engineer, who did not want to be named, said he saw a dog-like animal in his headlights near Torquay in May 2006. He described it in minute detail, from its slender body and fluid movements to the prison bar "salt and pepper" coloured stripes on its flanks. *"I can guarantee*



stripes on its flanks. "I can guarantee you there is a feral animal of some sort out there with short hair and stripes on the side; if someone says that description matches a tiger than I would say it is a tiger," he said.

Amateur researcher Michael Moss has logged eight recent sightings near Geelong, in a triangle between Anglesea, Torquay and Freshwater Creek. In November 1998 he videotaped what he claims was a thylacine in East Gippsland. The grainy footage can be found on YouTube.

Mr Moss has a theory that tigers were introduced to Wilsons Promontory between 1910 and 1915. During that time the park's committee of management had a policy of stocking the national park with endangered species including kangaroos, tiger quolls and birds.

"The timing is interesting because there are no records of tiger sightings until after 1912," Mr Moss said. "The tiger still had a reputation as a stock killer so the last thing the committee would want to do is publicise it for fear farmers would go and shoot them, so that could be one reason why it was kept quiet."

Local wildlife biologist and - at least according to the local newspapers - thylacine "guru" Nick Mooney had heard the theory before and said it didn't wash. *"There is no evidence whatsoever beyond a vague conspiracy. There were some animals released at Wilsons Promontory but tigers were not on the list,"* he said.

He and other independent experts have examined Mr Moss's footage and believe it to be a mangy fox carrying a rabbit. Most mainland sightings could similarly be dismissed as stray dogs, foxes or even illusions, because the last fossil record of thylacines on mainland Australia date back to 1000 years before white settlement.

But Mr Mooney, who works in the Tasmanian Government's wildlife management branch, is by no means a sceptic about the tiger's continued existence: "*I have always said it is possible - not probable, but possible.*" He still receives at least two "credible" Tasmanian sightings a year.

*"I got a call the other day from two shooters near Cradle Mountain who had to have seen a thylacine, or they are lying," Mr Mooney said in February 2008. "They were probably spotlighting illegally so there doesn't appear to be a motive for them to lie. The location was perfect and their description faultless."*

**AND FINALLY FOLKS**

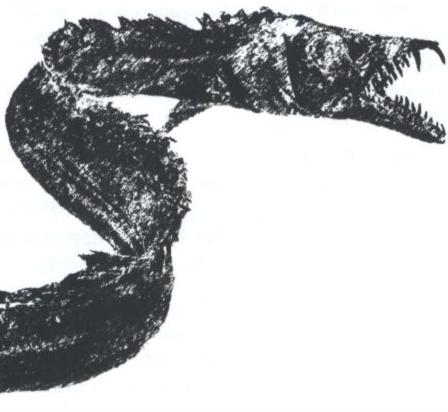
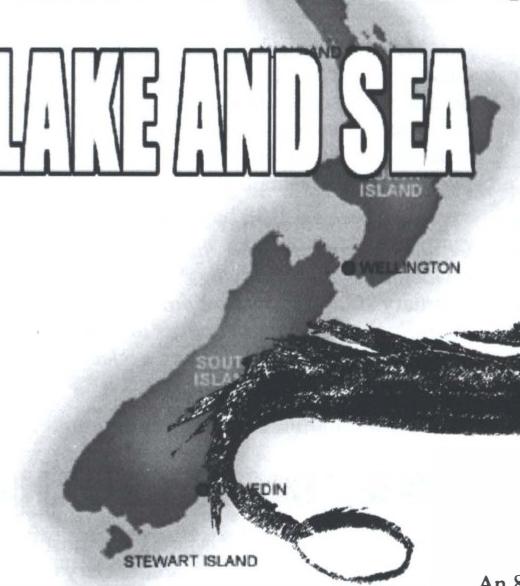
As we go to press in mid-March, the most recent report comes courtesy of researcher Gary Opit:

"January 2008, Byron Bay. Andrew and his wife were on holidays from Victoria, staying at an apartment off Cemetery Road in Byron Bay. On a bike ride to the beach they had a good look at what both thought may have been a Tasmanian tiger "*as ridiculous as that sounds*" stated Andrew.

"It had sandy coloured fur, a snubby muzzle and a long tail. It had the gait of a dog and certainly wasn't a feral cat. The stripes certainly were not bold.

My wife works at the Werribee zoo in Melbourne and it certainly wasn't like any of the cats they have there. We then mentioned it in passing to the bus driver on the way back to the airport and he said there had been some sightings".

# NEW ZEALAND SERPENTS OF LAKE AND SEA



By Tony Lucas

Strangely, New Zealand has a distinct lack of lake monsters despite having quite a few deep and beautiful lakes.

Tales of gigantic eels, as in many other countries, are not uncommon. Exceptional beasts as thick as a man's thigh and eight to ten feet in length have been reported. Elusive claims of attacks by Mosasaur like beasts, damaging boats and terrorising those that see them. For all these claims however, like the elusive "one that got away", there is no scientific data to back them up.

There have been anecdotal reports of giant eels from places like Lake Rotoiti in the South Island. However, Don Jellyman, a New Zealand authority on eels said, "we have fished Rotoiti many years ago and failed to find anything especially large". He does however have an authentic record of a 59lb beast that was caught many years ago in Otago.

An 80 lb creature was also caught in the Karamu stream on the eastern outskirts of Hastings in the North Island.

A Wairarapa sheep farmer recently told a Talkback radio show host, how he had killed a sheep for dog food at the top of a small cliff, below this cliff ran a slow-moving, deep creek. As he threw the rubbish from the kill into the stream he was amazed to hear an enormous amount of splashing. He looked over the edge of the cliff and saw two monstrous eels pulling at the intestines he had just thrown over in a gigantic tug-of-war and churning up the water. They were of such an immense size he couldn't believe it.

These gigantic eels appear to be sterile females that don't take part in the annual migration, but stay behind getting fatter and fatter on the rich food supply. They seem to favour slow, deep, vegetation filled streams.

There is an account of a small boat, which became

surrounded by a seething mass of 10ft long freshwater eels, and although details are sketchy, I believe this account took place in Rotoiti.

As for accounts of sea monsters, there are a few.

On August 1, 1889, Alexander Kerr, chief officer of the *Rotomahana*, witnessed a huge "conger eel" with two gigantic 10ft long fins. It rose up out of the water to a height of about 30ft. It was sighted off the Portland light between Gisborne and Napier. The creature had a crocodilian-like head.

The steamer *Manapouri*, on its voyage from Auckland to Gisborne on July 24, 1891 encountered a similar beast to the one seen by the *Rotomahana* off the Portland light. This time the creature was sighted a few miles north of East Cape. If this was the same creature it was apparently travelling in a southerly direction.

It was watched for about 10 minutes at a distance of about half a mile from the ship, as it travelled slowly raising and lowering itself 20 to 30ft out of the water, every two minutes or so.

It was described as having a black back with a white underbelly. Two flippers about 10ft long were also seen. It had a flat head.

On October 20th 1893, a sea serpent was seen a few miles to the south of Timaru by a passing steamer. The creature

lifted its head, which was serpent-like, 14 ft out of the water.

Once again, in 1911 a mysterious creature was seen on December 15th. The officers on board the ship *Stathardle* report passing a sea serpent in the Tasman Sea, 200 miles off the New Zealand coast.

The creature was described as being 200ft in length, and had a head like a crocodile, a large fin, and was brightly coloured.

The officers of the *Tavium* reported sighting a sea serpent off the Kermadec Islands on both the outward and inward journey to the Cook Islands during May, 1906. It was described as being reddish in colour; about 60ft long, and had a head resembling a gurnard. The beast was close to the vessel on both encounters and kept company with it for quite a while. There was 60 miles difference between the positions of the beast when



encountered on the outward journey and when seen on the inward journey.

Another creature was seen at the entrance to Wellington Harbour in 1926: Theo Hazelwood's attention was drawn to a long, thin neck drifting in the water on the surface at the rear of the vessel on which he was on. It had a small head and a mouthful of vicious looking fangs. The creature circled the boat five times, and then finally moved away.

The crew of the *Kompira Maru* encountered a "bug eyed monster" 30km off Littleton in April of 1971. Though crocodilian in appearance the creature had fins instead of legs, which were easily viewed as it leapt out of the water.

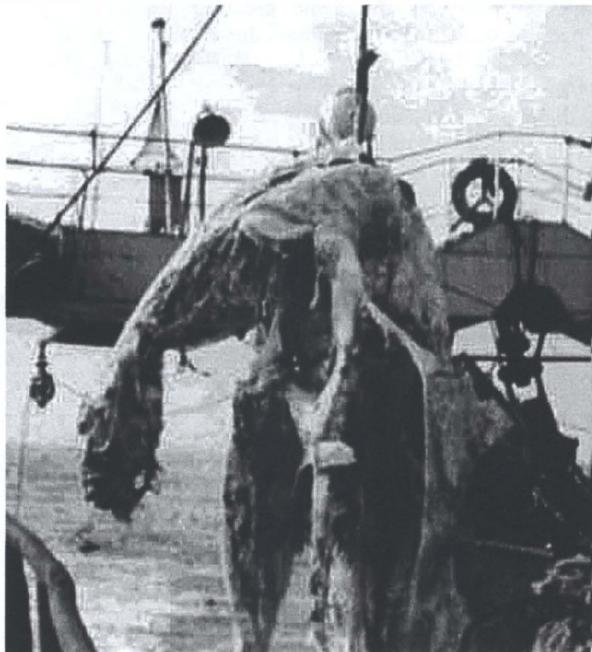
In 1972 three women were out whitebaiting at the mouth of the Orari River when they saw a huge creature in the breakers less than 30m away. They described it as a dark grey lizard-like animal that was about 15ft in length. It opened its mouth and displayed a maw full of sharp, small teeth.

There was the superficially plesiosaur-like carcass dredged up in the net of the Japanese trawler *Zuiyo Maru* in 1977 (see right). Later analysis of the photos taken - the original carcass was dumped for fear of contaminating the catch - seem to indicate this beast was no more than a decaying basking shark. The area was repeatedly searched for more plesiosaurs, but none were found. In 1983 off the coast of Picton a woman was allegedly harassed by a large Mosasaur-like creature. The 20ft long creature circled her raft, occasionally presenting its snout, which was full of sharp teeth. 1990 saw an account of two

women at a lagoon at Lake Taupo witness a large lizard in the shallows. They watched in amazement as the beast tried to snatch a bird, being unsuccessful, it then retreated into the depths of the Lake. They said it was green in colour and about 20ft in length.

As this area is well known for its geothermal activity and abundance of trout it would - in theory at least - be ideally suited to a large reptilian creature.

In 2001 a group of teenagers were boogeyboarding at Paekakariki when an enormous creature exploded out of the water in front of them. The description the teenager's gave exactly matched that of a Mosasaur. In 2006 a boat owned by Ian Levy was attacked and wrecked by two



18ft long lizard like creatures with fins. The attack by the Mosasaur like animals lasted for over an hour, they eventually lost interest and swam away. Damage to the boat was apparently extensive. The following year a Raumati woman and her daughter saw a whale-sized creature splashing about in the shallows.

Hawkes Bay on the east coast of the North Island is said to have its own resident sea monster. The beast is known as "Momori" and has been seen a couple of times over the years. It is said that when the sea is rough you may see the creature in the waves, which are curling, and just about to break. The local Maori are said to be very afraid of encounters with Momori.

Many of these encounters seem to be with a mosasaur-like creature and theories have been put forward that perhaps a small version of the mosasaur inhabits the New Zealand waters, and may even use them as a breeding area.

Could these creatures be juveniles? Or adults of the smaller mosasaur-like animal, and could the two that attacked Ian Levy's boat be a breeding pair showing territorial behaviour.

There are also, however, mysterious creatures that lurk in the New Zealand caves that surround the coastline. There was a recent case of a man entering the Cathedral Caves in the Catlins region of the South Island, (it should be noted these caves are only accessible at low tide

otherwise they are below water). It was dark so he switched his camera to night-vision to enable him to better see what was in the cave. At the rear of the cave lay a tangled mass of what looked like thick-stemmed seaweed.

He examined this find and in doing so accidentally stepped on one of the vines. Instantly a vine like appendage swung at his face wildly from out of the darkness. He fled immediately. This whole incident was captured on his video camera.

Another strange thing found on New Zealand shores is what is commonly known as a Globster. One of these washed ashore on the east coast of the North Island at Muriwai in 1968.

This mass of flesh was 30ft long and 8ft high. It was examined by J.E Morton, Chairman of the Zoology Department at the University of Auckland. Regrettably no samples were taken. Morton noted however, that the thing had a tough,



quarter-inch thick hide, overlying a layer of fat, under which was solid meat. Hair, 4-6 inches long, covered its entire length.

One creature in the cryptozoological category that inhabits the deep canyons off the East Coast of New Zealand is the giant squid.

These animals seem to be relatively common in these cold dark waters, along with its even bigger relative the Colossal Squid - *Mesonychoteuthis hamiltoni*. Estimates put the size of this creature at 12 - 14 metres (39-46 feet).

Another creature said to inhabit the lakes and waterways of New Zealand is the Taniwha.

These creatures act as guardians of the places in which they dwell. Tales of these creatures were widespread throughout the widely dispersed early Maori tribes.

It has been mentioned that perhaps these animals were ancestral memories of Crocodiles from the Maori's ancestral homelands.

Indeed, many tales of certain types of water Taniwha certainly mention crocodile like behaviour; even some of the beasts themselves resemble the crocodile in looks.

Paleontological evidence has now also possibly added some credence to these tales with the discovery of a fossilised tooth of a species of crocodile, which

inhabited New Zealand during the Miocene period.

Did these animals simply die out or did a remnant population survive into the period of early Maori colonisation?

Were these animals then incorporated into the local tribal legends, passed from one generation to another long after the actual animal's extinction?

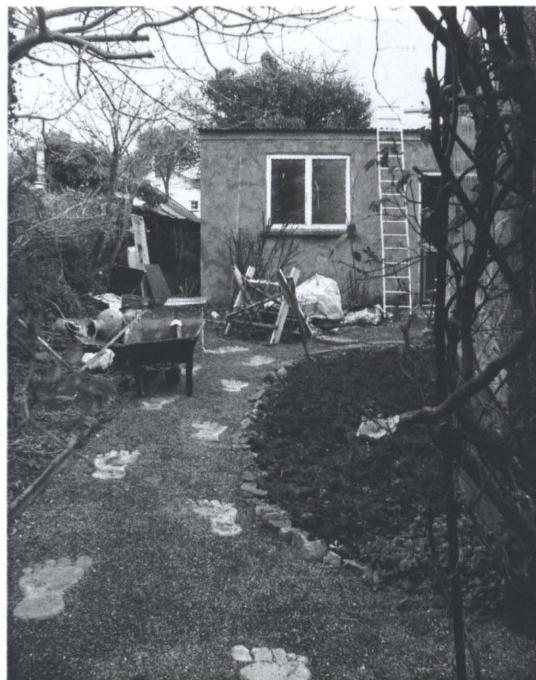
Perhaps there is more to be afraid of in New Zealand waters than just sharks.



# OPEN ME WO



When we last wrote about the museum a few issues ago, and showed you a picture of the top end of the CFZ grounds, it looked like this! It was a scrubby area of ground surrounding a tumbledown shed that had been built in the 1940s as a deep-litter henhouse. Now it looks like this:



The floor has been replaced, the roof fixed, the walls rendered, and there is a purpose built aviary block where once there was scrub!



The building in the foreground is the conservatory, which presently contains some of the CFZ menagerie, who will soon be rehoused in much more spacious accommodation in the museum building itself. This will become a conservatory again, with sub-tropical plants, but will also double as an aquarium room.

The only change to our previously published plans regards the tropical house which was planned for the area behind the museum. We had overlooked the fact that Graham needs a workshop, service area, and place to lurk, so for the moment at least, this area has become designated as 'Graham's Lurkery' .



## Letters to the Editor

The Editor and his band of merry men welcome an exchange of correspondence on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine. We reserve the right to edit letters and would like to stress that opinions voiced are those of the individual correspondent rather than being necessarily those of the editorial team or the Centre for Fortean Zoology. Every attempt is made not to infringe anyone's moral rights or copyright, and we apologise if we have unwittingly done so.

## TOGETHER WE'RE HEAVY

Dear *Animals and Men*,

I recently got to go to a talk at the Natural History Museum on "Freaks of Nature." Pictures of their "pig with two bottoms" and the two conjoined lamb skulls will be in *Fortean Times* shortly, but I'd just like to share with you the comments made by the Natural History Museum's mammal curator Richard Sabin.

We were talking about a congenital deformity that seems to turn up in North Sea white beaked dolphins occasionally - bodies of adult porpoises have been washed up with floppy vertebra. Sabin said that when whales start to decompose, their

skin detaches as the layer of blubber decomposes, the skin floats away, the skeleton in some cases come out of their mouths, leaving an indistinguishable "globster" mass. This could explain some of the stranger "sea monster" carcasses that have been washed up on various beaches around the world.

Also at Natural History Museum, one of the highly commended entries in the Wildlife Photographer of the Year award shows a huge shoal of fish moving close to the shallow floor of the Atlantic, off the Canary Islands. The shoal of small silvery fish is about 40ft long, and in close formation, looking remarkably like a huge serpent or eel. In the text accompanying the photo, the Spanish photographer said how he was diving at the time he took the photo and thought he had seen a huge, single creature. He commented that many species of "pelagic" fish move around the warmer waters of the Atlantic in these tight, serpentine shoals. Another source of sea serpent sightings?

Matt Salusbury,  
London

## GET UP AND GO

Dear Jon,

Having re-read *The Owlman and Others* and recently returned from a Cornish holiday, where I dragged my long-suffering family round all the places mentioned in the book, here is my shot at Gonzo journalism!

Well it started off well enough; a whistle stop tour of Devon & Cornwall. I had to see with my own eyes the place where all this weird shit started some 30 years ago.

I had mistakenly assumed that the *Seven Stars* was near the quayside so when we stumbled upon it by chance in the middle of town set back off the road I got a pleasant surprise. The wooden sign board displaying the pub's name had long since fallen down. A large length of tarpaulin tied to the rickety rusting balcony now served as a pub sign.

(Although how long it is before this too comes crashing down is anyone's guess.) A small tree was growing out of the guttering and I am sure if I could get a ladder up there I would find a whole micro world of interesting and yet undiscovered insect species. Joanne, Rosie and I opted for the snug at the back of the pub, I ordered the drinks and we took our seats just as the main show in the bar was about to start. We could see through the doorway into the bar, a large middle aged sozzled Cornish lady held centre stage, with arms like Popeye and breasts like a dead heat in a Zeppelin race she announced to the assembled throng in a lovely thick brogue that "*I may not be a Claudia Schifferrrr but I must be the only wife to actively encourage her husband to drink more!*"

She then went on to explain the virtues of real ale as she took huge gulps of some grim concoction the colour of weak gravy called Professor Cockshaft's Kidney Knacker or some other equally fanciful name. It seems that she and her actively encouraged husband had been to a beer festival and had been drinking steadily for days, getting more and more pickled as each day passed. If I were a betting man I'd wager it would be she, and not he that would be still standing when the kegs were drunk dry. A quick look round the place confirmed what I had already suspected and I thought to myself, if Miss Faversham ever wanted a tavern to drink away her melancholy over her lost love then the *Seven Stars* was it as the place is in perpetual state of disintegration.

The place had not seen a lick of paint in years and huge chunks of plaster where missing from the ceiling. I only hope that when they came down it wasn't on some unfortunate customer's head. I thought it impolite to ask if that indeed was the case. The toilets are fighting a losing battle with dampness and the ceiling looks ready to drop at a moments notice... I did my business and made a

quick exit. Forever lost in a time warp the décor is a glorious mishmash of 20's, 30's to the 70's tat. But the Guinness is to die for and I only hope that when we visit next year the place has not fallen in on itself, for the *Seven Stars* is one of last bastions of that rare thing known as.....A real honest to goodness public house.

Regards  
Dave Curtis

PS: this is taken from the *Falmouth Packet*.

### Parish to run graveyard extension

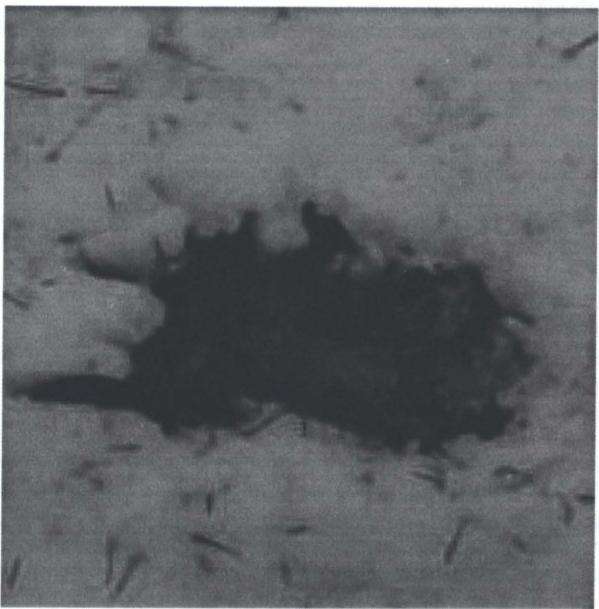
MAWNAN Parish Council has agreed to take on the management of a new graveyard extension at St Mawnan Church. The council are currently negotiating the purchase of land behind the current graveyard which is owned by the National Trust and can only be disposed of with a compulsory purchase order. Kerrier district council have been drafted in to help with the legal procedures involved with purchasing the land and they are also preparing a planning application to change the use of the land from agricultural to graveyard.

### THE FRAGILE ARMY

Jonny

I am attaching three photos from a German friend. She asked if they can be identified. Any ideas? As you'll see one is a long-shot of her garden, where it looked like something walked around in an odd pattern, almost like one foot in front of the other. Pics 2 and 3 are of the footprints (or whatever they are....). Any ideas?

Nick Redfern



## OVERBLOW YOUR NEXT

Jon - I am copying you a letter written to the editor of the *Rugby Standard*:

Sir,

I was interested to read your article about the possibility of a colony of Bengal cats living as feral animals in the South Warwickshire area. When Bengals were first introduced into the UK a few years ago it was an issue that I, and several other zoologists, addressed. At that time there were only a few of the animals and we knew that they would be well looked after by their owners because of their value.

The problem was that because the animal is up to

50% wild cat and the rest domestic it must, by definition, have a better propensity to survive in the wild than the domestic cat. Some of this will of course be more attuned hunting skills, that have not been bred out of it. When it is considered that the domestic cat will often "go feral", i.e. cease to be a pet and move back into the wild, we have a potential for a "super breed" of wild cat".

With these hybrids the first crosses are often bigger than either parent species, so Bengal Cats are often bigger than either Indian Leopard Cats or Domestic Cats. This happens whether they are born and reared in the wild or in captivity. As further generations occur they are often smaller, until after maybe ten generations they come back down to the normal size of either parent species. This is nothing to do with living in the wild as your "exotic animal investigator and tracker"

suggests. Indeed when animals are isolated on islands the general rule is that animals bigger than a rabbit get smaller (e.g. the "human hobbit" - Homo floresensis remains), and animals smaller than a rabbit get bigger (e.g. the Skomer Vole).

At present any crossbred wildcat (i.e. wildcat species crossed with domestic cat) that has a non-domestic species as a parent requires a Dangerous Wild Animal Act licence.

From October some of these rules have been relaxed and it will be possible to own some species that will hybridise with domestic cats without any restriction other than having the money to purchase it.

Putting this number of wild cat genes back into the wild animal population of Great Britain must put the domestic wildlife under greater pressure with the possible extinction of some ground living birds in the long term.

Yours Faithfully,  
Chris M. Moiser,

## GUARANTEED NIGHTLITE

Hello Jon,

Just ploughed through the web telly since November and very good it is.

Got sidetracked looking at your blog and would like to express my commiserations for what must have been a very mixed year.

Here's hoping 2008 throws you many fewer curved balls and CFZ goes from strength to strength. We spoke about prodigious eels last year; if you ever want a layman-enthusiast's opinion/wild conjecture on our native predatory fish feel free to

write.

Slightly OT but I've been re-reading Fred Buller's 'Pike and the pike angler' a reprint of his seminal 1971 book 'Pike'. (Buller's masterwork *The Domesday Book of Mammoth Pike*, a learned piece of giant esox research that belies its title was once on each library shelf in the land but it appears every single one has been nicked to appear on eBay for hundreds of pounds - I digress)

Anyway, I was reminded of something I'd forgotten.

In Chapter 5 - *Enemies of Pike* he discusses various incidences of pike being attacked by ospreys and sea eagles. What happened was the bird would attack the pike but find itself unable to lift the fish.

Tiring from the battle and unable to dislodge its talons from the pike mortal combat would continue in the fish's realm and the osprey would drown.

The pike would continue its existence with the avian skeleton, typically algae green, permanently attached to its back.

As pike often spend the warmer months basking on the surface, the skeletal figure of the osprey would drift over the water, the locals assuming a Sjo-troll was at large.

Not a strictly cryptozoological story I admit but not without Fortean interest,  
Best Wishes

Colin Higgins  
Holmfirth, West Yorks

## RUNNING AWAY

Jon,

Perhaps it's a long shot, but maybe your Missouri guy could investigate. This could be the work of someone marking off the trail for a race or something, but seemed very straight and directional carrying a lot of dust to one side as if it could have been a snake that crossed.

Let me start by beginning that as a kid I saw a black snake I estimate between 15 and 18 ft. in length crossing a gravel road in Hillsdale KS while on a family farm driving home with my parents. I know this by later measuring off the road where the sighting occurred. Record size of a black snake in North America is a Black Rat snake approximately 8.5 ft in length. Anyway this caught me awkward and last year pulled up a ton of reports of large snake sightings across the US. All of the reports are of black snakes like the one I saw. This prompted me to wonder if a sub species or completely undiscovered species of Black Snake may exist in small populations. Specimens below 8 feet in size might be discounted by farmers and others who see them as just large snakes.

Although I have been hopeful someday I would see a large snake again I never really expected to again see anything. I did hear through my wife that a neighbor told her they saw a black snake stretched across the road in a new area of development near a state park, but not sure really what that means.. for all I know she could have seen a 5 ft snake and called it that size.

However, today while mountain biking I found something that caught my attention. There was a path of pushed gravel as if something very large and heavy was drug across the trail. I stopped for a close inspection and noticed gravel was drug

towards one direction of the trail towards a river positioned around 200 feet away from the trail in that area. Upon return to the site today I measured it at 6" wide. I have no idea how large a snake would be with this type of girth or whether these imprints could be authenticated a possibly a snake rather than just someone marking off the trail. So I took these photos.

There are around 6 places like this in around an 1/8 mile stretch of trail crossing it running towards the river. Most barely visible and old, but the other imprints seem depressed into the trail when there was mud. Depressions are faintly visible with no foot prints around them, which appears perhaps promising that one or more specimens could be living in the area. Last I tried to repeat marking off the trail in another area to see if I could recreate the mark and I did make a mark, but it was rather crooked.

I thought I would report this to you and see if your Missouri representative would have an interest in contacting me. I would be more than happy to direct him to the trail where this is occurring near Blue Springs, MO. (East of Kansas City)

Bryan B



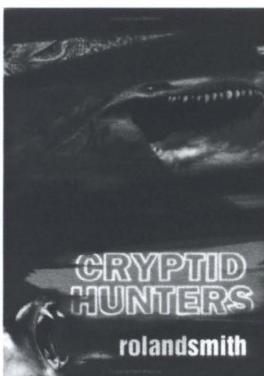
# REVIEWS



## Cryptid Hunters by Roland Smith

Hardcover: 352 pages

Publisher: Hyperion Books for Children;  
ISBN-13: 978-0786851614



wedding gifts was this book, from our friend, and CFZ Indiana representative, Elizabeth Clem. We thanked her, and the book joined the teetering pile of books waiting to be read which graces my side of the marital bed.

Much to my embarrassment, it was only a few days in bed with a bug about three weeks ago that spurred me into finally reading it, and I have only one word for it: MAGNIFICENT. I am not a fan of crypto-fiction as a whole, and to be quite honest I find much contemporary juvenilia too refined and PC for my liking, but this book is a veritable *tour de force*. It tells the story of twelve year old twins who - following the disappearance of their parents - go to live with an eccentric uncle who happens to be a cryptozoologist. They soon find themselves embroiled in a life and death struggle to find the last clutch of eggs of the mokole mbembe, and save them from a satisfyingly nasty corporate villain.

The hero, Wolfe, is unusual, in that he is a disabled, big

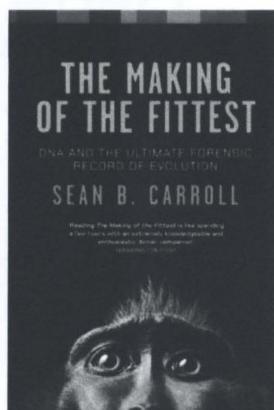
bloke with long hair and an unkempt beard. Being such a fellow myself, I am always pleased when authors resist the temptation to make their characters identikit G.I.Joes, with short back and sides, and bodies in perfect working order.

So I checked out the author's website, and wrote to him, and it turned out that Senor Smith is actually a member of the CFZ. To my slight embarrassment, but great pride, he wrote: "*I actually thought about you when I was developing Wolfe and Marty.. There is a bit of you in both of them.*" It is all very gratifying, but I hope that you realise what you have done Mr Smith! My nieces and nephews will never be satisfied with just paying a visit to Uncle Jon now - they will all demand adventures like this one!

A smashing book. Despite my unwitting role within it, I cannot recommend it highly enough. JD

## *The Making of the Fittest: DNA and the Ultimate Forensic Record of Evolution* by Sean B. Carroll

Hardcover: 288 pages Publisher:  
Quercus ISBN-13: 978-1847244765



The first of two books this month which look at the mysteries of evolution. This book does so, specifically by examining the record of the evolutionary progress of successive species by examining the evidence unearthed by the human genome project.

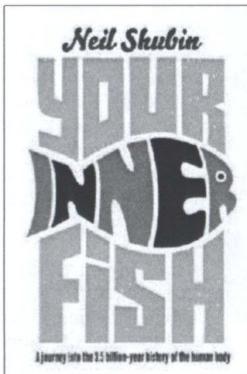
Something that I have always had difficulty in understanding is the relationship between the rate of biological mutation, and the laws of probability. Probably the fact that I failed my Maths O

Level in the most ignominious fashion back in 1976, and have only made a few attempts at learning conventional mathematics in the intervening years, has something to do with it. However, this book explains the actual mathematics of genetic mutations in a way that even I can understand, and the whole subject suddenly becomes clearer.

Although the author uses this book to take a well-deserved pop at those who deny evolution, and explodes their arguments as pointless, he doesn't jump on the currently popular atheist bandwagon, and indeed quotes a leading churchman who says that in his opinion there is nothing contradictory between a belief in God, and an adherence to the doctrine of Evolution; an argument with which I am totally in agreement.

There are too many scientists, who - after examining the totally unscientific, and often frankly ludicrous, claims of the anti-evolutionists use these as a basis for making an equally unfounded claim that God him/her/itself doesn't exist. Sean Carroll should be congratulated, not only for an excellent book, but for resisting the lure of short term kudos from jumping upon an irritating sociopathic bandwagon. Well done. JD

## *Your Inner Fish: A Journey into the 3.5 Billion-Year History of the Human Body* by Neil Shubin



This book covers much of the same ground as the book reviewed above, although from a different perspective, and also avoids the trap of being lured into the popular atheist debate. However, it is much more approachable than Carroll's tome, because not only is it more engagingly written, but on the whole it is written from a first-person perspective, and tells the

story of how the author reached his conclusions as to the nature of vertebrate evolution, whilst trekking across the globe in search of fossil fish.

For, whereas Carroll uses the code within DNA to tell the story of evolution, Shubin largely tells the story through exploration of the fossil record, and does so with the skill of a true story-teller.

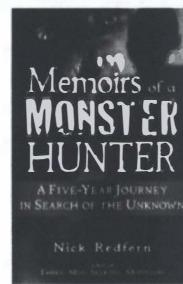
I would seriously suggest that you buy both books, because, although they do overlap to a certain extent, they are remarkably complementary to each other, and together tell a remarkable story. JD

## *Memoirs of a Monster Hunter: A Five Year Journey in Search of the Unknown* by Nick Redfern

Paperback: 256 pages

Publisher: New Page Books

ISBN-13: 978-1564149763



The second book this month which includes yours truly - this time in a non-fictionalised form. This is basically the sequel to Redfern's massively entertaining *Three men seeking Monsters* and tells the story of five years of cryptozoological meanderings across the U.S of A.

With each successive book Redfern is becoming more and more a gonzo journalist, and less the earnest, slap-headed deliver into Government Files who made his reputation a decade or so back with books like *A Covert Agenda* and *The FBI files*. This, to my mind at least, is a very good thing, as it allows Redfern's undoubtedly gift for narrative to come to the fore, and sets the cryptozoological mysteries against the backdrop of his own personal journey.

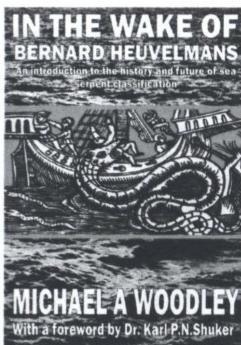
I found it particularly interesting to read, as I was either aware of, or in some cases, part of what was going on in his life as he went through the experiences - often monumentally life-changing - that are recounted in this

book. Basically, it is the everyday story of a shaven-headed UFOlogist from Brummeland who travels to the USA to a dull conference, meets his soul mate, marries her against the advice of all his mates (especially me, who said that marrying someone you meet at a UFO conference, after a long-distance relationship of only a few months, was a ludicrously bad idea), and not only proves them wrong (they are still happily married seven years later), but carves out a new career and a new life for himself in Texas.

In many ways Redfern's own story is more interesting than any of the mystery animal quests described in these pages. Whereas the search for bigfoot, goatman and el chupacabra is an undeniably fascinating one, the story of Redfern's quest for a new life, and how he ultimately found it is heartwarming in the extreme.

I am in the book, albeit in a minor role, and readers of *Three men seeking Monsters* will be disappointed to learn that I don't fall over once, nor do I wear a monocle, or a gold lame dressing gown, although I am portrayed once in Puerto Rico moaning about my hemorrhoids. Thank you Redfern for having finally destroyed what little mystique I had left! JD

**In the Wake of Bernard Heuvelmans**  
by Michael A Woodley  
Paperback: 176 pages  
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Ever since humankind first ventured out onto the oceans, sailors came back with stories of sea monsters.

For two hundred years, scientists have been attempting to classify these 'creatures' within an acceptable zoological frame of reference.

The most important of these

was produced by Professor Bernard Heuvelmans half a century ago. In the intervening fifty years, something has happened of which I doubt that Heuvelmans would have approved.

His works, especially the two main English Language books *On the Track of Unknown Animals* and *In the Wake of the Sea Serpents* have become sacred texts, and cryptozoological fundamentalists, of whom there are more than you might think, refuse to criticise or even re-examine his work.

In what some may see as the ultimate act of cryptozoological apostasy, but what I see as a brave, and much-needed re-examination of the facts, Michael Woodley takes a look at Heuvelmans' classification model, re-examines it in the light of new discoveries in palaeontology and ichthyology over the past fifty years, and reaches some astounding conclusions.

I would hope that the cryptozoological establishment greets this book in the spirit in which it was intended.

Dr Karl Shuker has provided the foreword which legitimises it to a degree that otherwise, the first cryptozoological book by an author hitherto unknown in the field would probably never be, and I hope that this review will also serve as an endorsement of Woodley's work.

Michael Woodley is a meticulous author, and even if one does not agree with all of his conclusions, one can only admire the reasoning that led him to them.

If cryptozoology as a discipline is to progress, then it needs a constant succession of new blood, and furthermore new blood who are prepared to examine the mysteries of cryptozoology from an academic and literate perspective, and to bring something new to the discipline.

One thing that I feel is beyond doubt, is that Michael Woodley is a powerful new face on the cryptozoological scene, and that he is an author who will be around the pages of this journal for many years to come. JD

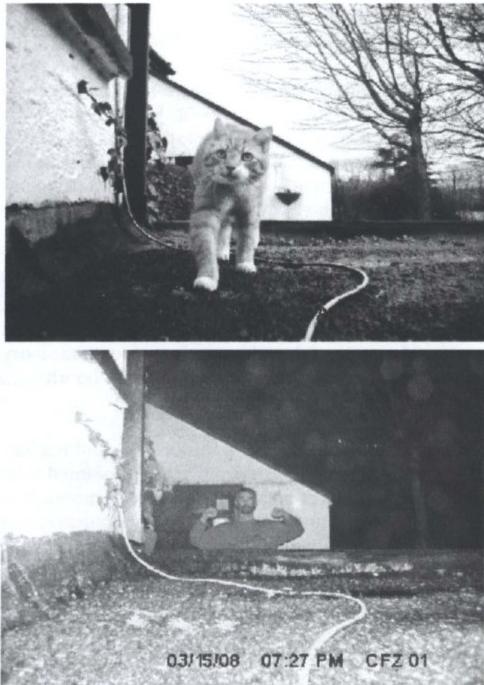
# THE SYCOPHANT



Deep in a cave beneath Loch Ness lives a strange figure who steals ideas from other magazines and then somehow makes them his own.

## TRIGGERCAM TESTS

As part of our ongoing investigation into the big cat sightings at Huddisford woods, just up the road from the CFZ, we have recently purchased two infra-red trigger cameras. They seem to work well, because during a series of initial equipment tests around the grounds of the CFZ, where we are attempting to calibrate them, and learn how to use the damn things to their best advantage, we have already taken pictures of a mystery felid and a strange, sub-human figure flexing its muscles in the darkness.



## THAT'S SHOWBIZ

Sometimes media types really beggar belief, and try the patience of the CFZ almost to breaking point. We were recently contacted by a US television company interested in making a series of documentaries about cryptozoology.

They wanted information, and help, from us. Firstly, they were interested in making a documentary about British big cats, and they had seen the video footage of a sheep that we believed met its untimely demise at the paws of one of these creatures, that was included in the January edition of our webTV show *On the Track*.

Of course, we were happy to help, but we were not prepared to let these stupid bloody people have our

footage for nothing - and told them so very politely. Not only was there then a chilly silence, but they then wanted us to GUARANTEE that there would be another sheep carcass for them to examine during a week's window when their camera crew were in the UK.

Jon just laughed, and said that he couldn't guarantee any such thing. They then became pushy and asked to examine the carcass that we had filmed back in December. Surely, they said, we would have stored it somewhere. Jon laughed again, and said that his poor sainted wife Corinna had enough to put up with, looking after him and the boys from the CFZ, and having a kitchen full of assorted amphibia, without having suppurating sheep's carcasses dragged into the house willy-nilly.

To date, these particular scions of the LA media haven't phoned back.

But one of their colleagues has! Would we (again, for nothing) provide all our contacts on Puerto Rico so they could carry out a vampire hunt? As Jon has just finished a 130,000 word book in which he explains his theory that the sightings of the spiky backed beast known as *el chupacabra* have little or nothing to do with vampiric attacks on livestock, we politely declined.

Whereas we have always done a lot of TV work, our documentaries on CFZtv are now reaching such high audiences (over 30,000 people have seen our Mongolia documentary, and over 20,000 have seen our Gambia one, and well over 1000 people a month watch *On the Track*, that we are beginning not to need the mainstream media. Advances in technology have already destroyed the traditional music industry; artists no longer need record companies to sell their records for them, and the TV industry will be next. If the idiots with half-assed media studies degrees who hassle us on an almost daily basis don't wake up and smell the coffee soon, then they will find themselves redundant.

And good riddance!

## BIFFO-BEASTS

We invited our old mate Biffo along to the BCIB conference at Tropiquaria in early March. He did not let us down. Not only did he bring along with him 'Mr Udders' (aka Gavin Lambert) his old sparring partner from the days when he edited *Digitiser* (the Channel 4 teletext magazine), and his two lovely



daughters (whom Jon christened 'The Bifflettes'), but he added his own, surreally stupid take on the matters discussed.

On the Friday night, Rick Minter organised a discussion workshop - one of the topics of which was to come up with a slogan for British big cat research. There were the inevitable pussy jokes from certain sectors of the (non CFZ) audience, but Biffo surpassed himself with:

Q: What do you call the best cat in the world?  
A: Catson 3000

Which not only brought stunned looks from the less surreal attendees, and made Richard and Jon collapse in fits of laughter, but won the prize! Surely, there is a Santa Claus!

